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ABSTRACT

This manual for parents and child care personnel in day care homes and centers (1) gives an outline of dimensions of normal physical, mental, language and social/emotional development in children from birth to five years of age, (2) indicates what children need from adults in order to develop normally, and (3) identifies problems and suggests ways to handle them. The manual is divided into three sections. Section I considers the first 18 months of life in three 6-month periods in order to give detailed attention to this period of rapid development. Special attention is given to the infant behaviors as they occur for the first time. The role of the caregiver in making accurate and detailed records of the conditions under which specific symptoms occur is stressed. Section II covers the period from 18 months to three years of age. Emotional needs of the child and their implications for social development are emphasized. Section III considers development from the third to the fifth year. The greater range and level of activity of 3- to 5-year-olds are explored. (Three slide/sound presentations and pamphlets were produced in conjunction with this manual.) (RH)

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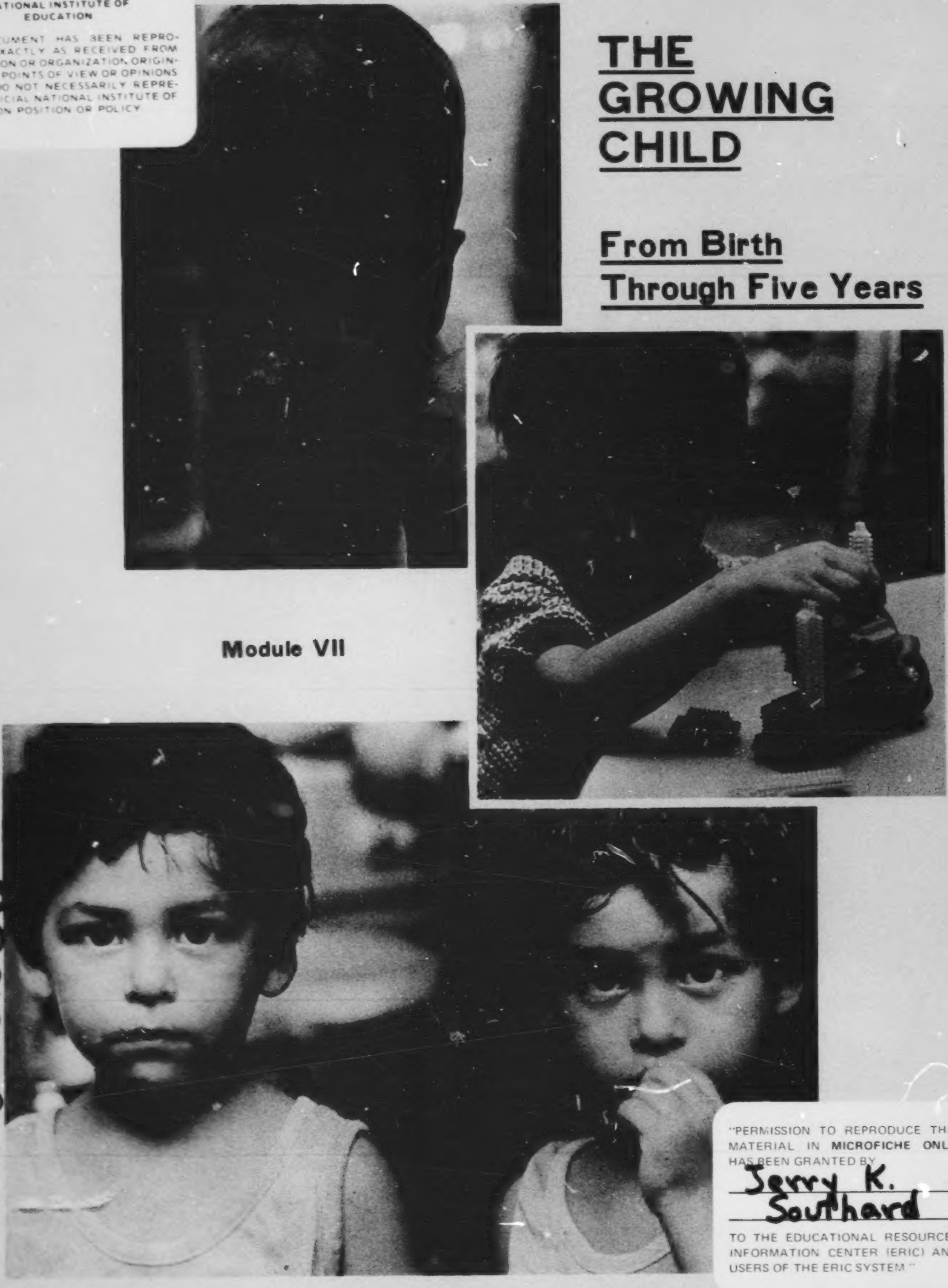
THE GROWING CHILD

From Birth Through Five Years



Module VII

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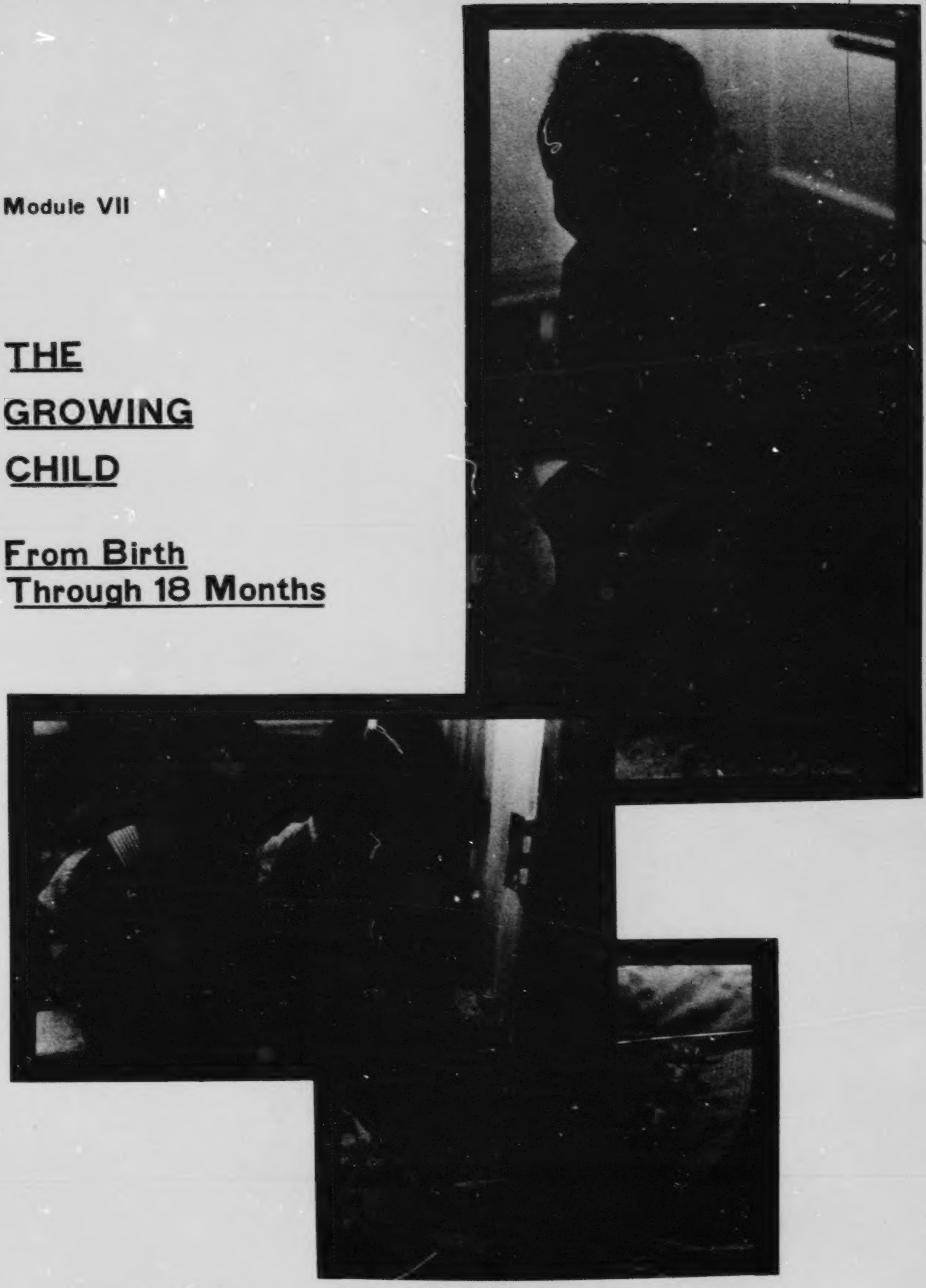
Module VII

THE GROWING CHILD

From Birth Through 18 Months



Module VII

THE GROWING CHILD

From Birth Through 18 Months

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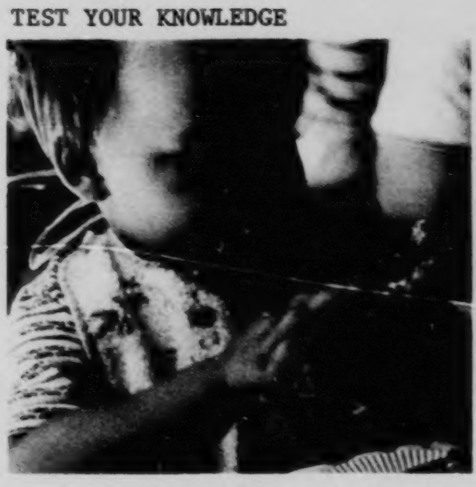
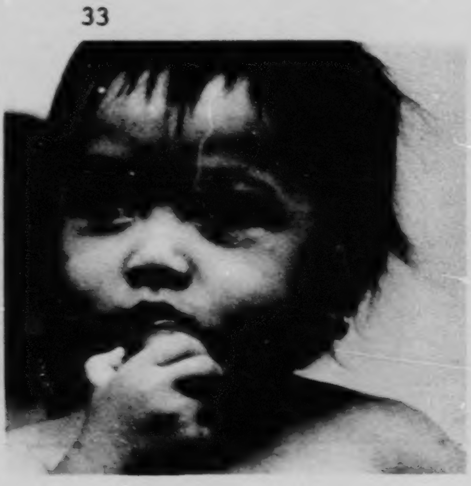




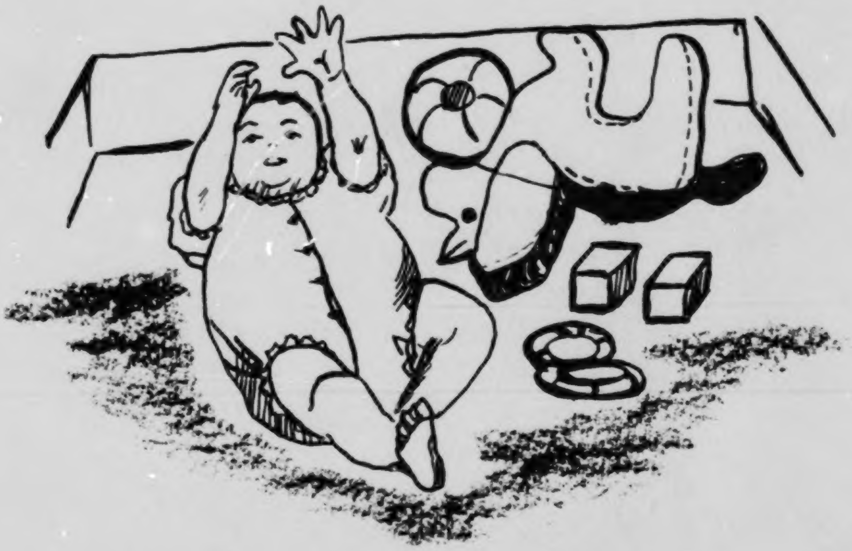
Module VII

THE GROWING CHILD... Birth Through Eighteen Months

New born babies are helpless--unable to think, talk, move about, or interact with others. During the first 18 months of life, exciting changes occur. The helpless infant becomes an active toddler, able to:

- control motor movements and move about
- use mental abilities in learning about the world through seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching
- understand others and say a few words
- relate to others through smiles, movement, and words.

Physical, language, mental, and socio-emotional changes are dramatic and obvious in the first one-and-a-half years. Each baby is different from other babies, and no baby develops according to a rigid timetable. Still, each child's development will follow certain stages similar to other children's.



Module VII

This module has been designed to provide you, the adult caregiver, information about normal changes in physical, mental, language, and social/emotional development which occur during the first 18 months of life. The second section of the module titled, What Children Need From Adults, includes information on things adults can do to help the child. Because so many changes occur during this period, these sections have been subdivided into six month periods: birth to 6 months, 6 to 12 months, and 12 to 18 months. Those who work or live with children often are faced with unusual situations or problems regarding the child's development. The third section, Identifying and Handling Problems, includes information on what to be alert for and ways of getting help for specific problems that arise.

I WHAT TO EXPECT

Learning about the developmental stages of children can help adults know what to do to help babies become happy, healthy toddlers. Each child moves through these stages at his or her own speed. There are no clear steps from one stage to the next. Many overlap, and some may take place in a slightly different order.

It is important to recognize that there are no absolute divisions between physical, language, mental, and socio-emotional development. Development in one area relates to and affects development in other areas. For example, children's ability to move about and see things influences their mental development. The more children see and do, the more they have to think about. The more children smile, coo, or say, the more attention they receive from adults, and in this way their social development is increased.

Remember too, that as children's energy is directed to the development of skills in one area, their development in another area may slow down or even reverse. When a child is learning to walk, for example, he or she may talk very little or may be unable or unwilling to say things he or she used to say. This is normal and temporary and does not mean that the child is being stubborn. This is a problem that will correct itself.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

From Birth To Six Months

Infants begin to explore their new world by using the basic skills with which they are born. They are born knowing how to suck, and their sucking ability improves as they nurse. When they are first given soft foods, their natural response is to suck from the spoon. Gradually, as babies are given more solid food, they gum it to make it soft enough to swallow. When they begin to cut teeth, they learn to chew.

Gumming small objects is a favorite pastime for infants. At first they gum their own fists; then they discover their fingers. Once babies learn to pick things up, they put everything into their mouths. Gumming things is a way of learning, and it is also a way of helping teeth to come in.

One of the first skills infants develop is head movement. Gradually, they learn to turn their heads from side to side while lying on their backs. At around five months of age they learn to roll over, then begin pulling themselves up to a sitting position. By seven months of age, most babies can sit unsupported or without help from an adult.

Control of the eyes, which is a part of physical development, is also a part of learning and thinking. Babies like faces or pictures of faces, but they are especially fascinated by slow moving objects. Around six weeks of age, infants begin to follow moving objects with their eyes. By about four months, babies can move their heads to follow small and large objects with their eyes. If the object is not interesting, they may stare awhile and then look for something new. Watching things is an important way for infants to learn.

When babies first begin to reach for objects, it looks as if they are trying to hit them. Taking hold of dangling objects is an important skill, because it is through looking and touching that infants first learn about objects. They play with objects, shaking them and moving them from hand to hand. Through this play, babies learn to use their hands and eyes together.

From Six To Twelve Months

During these months babies spend much time learning to move around. As their motor coordination improves, they love to repeat new "tricks" over and over again.

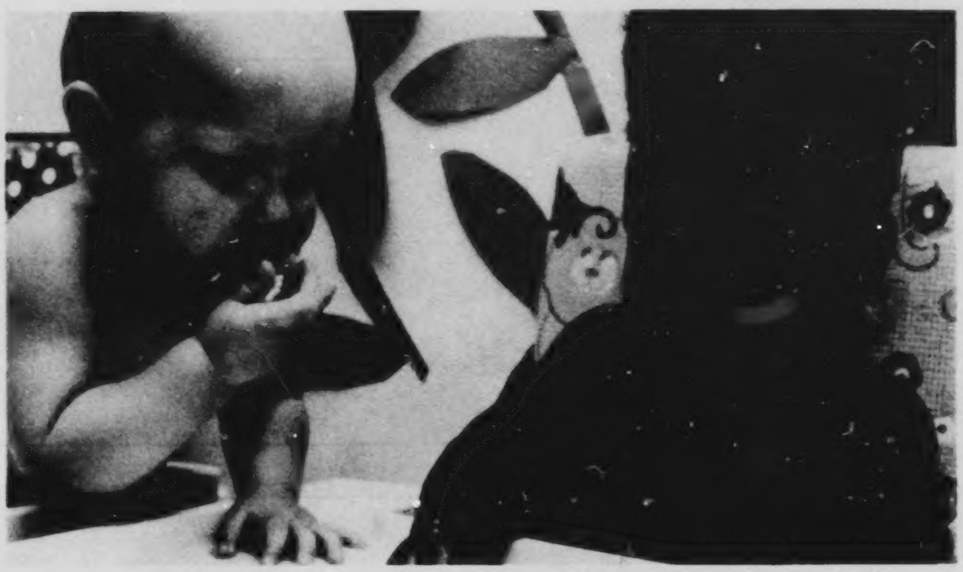
When some babies start to crawl, they get up onto their hands and knees and move,using both arms and both legs. Others scoot, using their elbows to pull themselves forward. How they crawl doesn't matter. What is important is that the baby attempts to move from place to place.

After they learn to crawl, infants learn to climb onto very low things. Babies love to move around! Next, at about eleven or twelve months, they learn to climb onto things about a foot tall. As they learn to climb, they pull themselves up to a standing position. Slacks, skirts, furniture, people--anything that doesn't move will be used for support while standing. Occasionally, some babies reach a standing position without assistance, but ususally they learn to stand by pulling up onto objects.

Walking while holding on to objects for support is practice for walking alone. After babies learn to pull up, they often become interested in something else and let go without realizing it. Suddenly they are standing alone. As they develop this skill, they become able to stand alone for longer and longer periods of time.

As babies discover their hands and fingers, they delight in seeing what they can do with them. Poking with one finger is a good start. Babies learn about objects by touching, feeling, banging, throwing, shaking, and dropping things. About the time babies become interested in small things within reach, they also learn to use their thumb and one finger.

During the period from six to twelve months, babies begin to learn to feed themselves. They can hold a bottle to drink, pick up small pieces of food, and try to guide a spoon from the dish to their mouth. They usually miss their mouths but hit their hair, the floor, and everything. Gradually they learn to close their lips on a spoon to remove food, lick food off a spoon, and eat mashed food. With help, they can drink from a cup. As control of the lips and tongue develops, they also stop drooling.



From Twelve To Eighteen Months

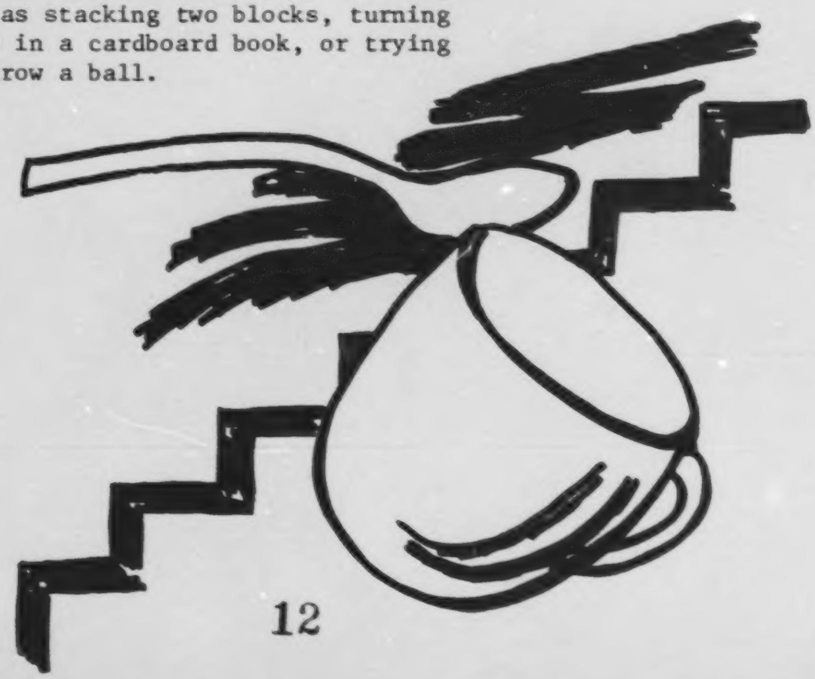
Most babies can walk alone by the time they are eighteen months old. This is a very important accomplishment, enjoyed by adults as well as young children. Some babies begin walking early, while others wait until they are nearly two years old. This is not a cause for concern. It is simply a natural difference in children.

When babies begin to walk, they can find more things to see--and get into! Babies are naturally curious, and as they move around more easily and quickly, they often get into dangerous things.

Babies like to move upward as well as forward, and climbing is fun. Stairs also fascinate them. They learn to crawl up stairs before they learn to get down.

At this age, children can use a cup and a spoon to feed themselves, but they still spill quite a bit. They can chew well and can eat most table foods, although meat must be cut into small bites.

Their hand control is also improving, as seen in their ability to do things such as stacking two blocks, turning pages in a cardboard book, or trying to throw a ball.



MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

From Birth To Six Months

Babies begin to learn by making general movements with their hands, arms, head, feet, and legs.

- After moving these parts of the body many times, children discover that they can start to control and use them. At first they randomly grasp hold of an object, shake it, and hear it. When they learn they can put these movements together, they begin to do these things intentionally. Most babies will not be able to reach skillfully for what they want until they are around five months old.

- To babies, objects exist only when they can see them. Eventually they begin to realize that objects continue to exist. They will try to find the missing object.

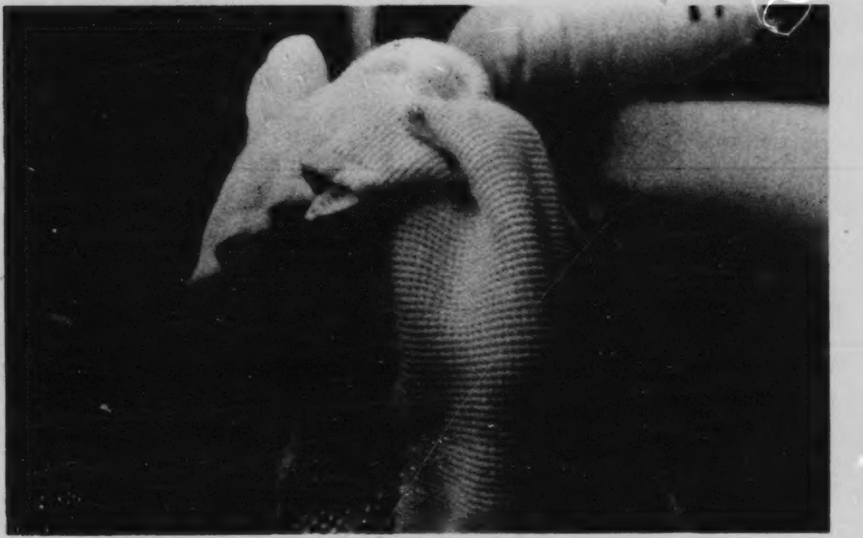
6-12

From Six To Twelve Months

- During this period, babies begin to imitate facial expressions and other body movements. These early imitations usually involve the head, face, and hands. Clapping games and peek-a-boo are examples of ways babies imitate.

- They are beginning to learn that an object still exists when it is out of sight. They enjoy looking for objects which have been partially covered or hidden while they watch. However, their attention span is short and the search doesn't last long.

- At seven or eight months infants drop things on the floor for the joy of watching them fall. They do not understand why an object breaks, bounces, or makes a loud noise, but they do understand that they can drop things. Their continual dropping of things is not meanness or stubbornness, but is their way of learning that they have the power to make something happen. It is a type of experimenting in order to learn.



12-18

From Twelve To Eighteen Months

This is a time of curiosity, with children into everything and anything.

- Young children are naturally curious, and this curiosity should be encouraged. These early experiences form the basis for learning other skills, for making sounds, words, or movements until they learn how to do them.

- Youngsters enjoy things they can move, shake, rattle, and roll. They like to hunt for a toy covered with a cloth or box until it is found again.

Throughout this period, mental development is closely linked to motor and language development. Sometimes it almost seems as if you can "see" 18-month-olds thinking. They will play with a toy, put it down, look at it, hit it, and pick it up again, as if to say, "I can do this and this with my toy, and what else can I do now?" Their ability to think can also be seen in the way they use words, often the same words, with hand movements or a change of voice to mean different things. The phrase "Me dink" may be used to ask for a drink as well as to explain what he or she is doing. One word may refer to an entire group of words. For example "dog" may be used for all animals. "Dada" may be used for all men. They know what they are doing and they are thinking about how to describe their actions, but their words are still limited.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Along with motor development, the initial development of language is one of the most important events of this period. Adults tend to think language development starts with the first words they hear the child say. However, language development begins at birth, at the time when infants first hear sounds, see, touch objects, and begin to associate sounds with meaning. Long before babies can speak, they hear many words and sounds. It is only after babies have heard words said many times and have had their efforts at smiling, cooing, and making sounds encouraged and praised that they begin to talk.

WA COO BA EE DA GA

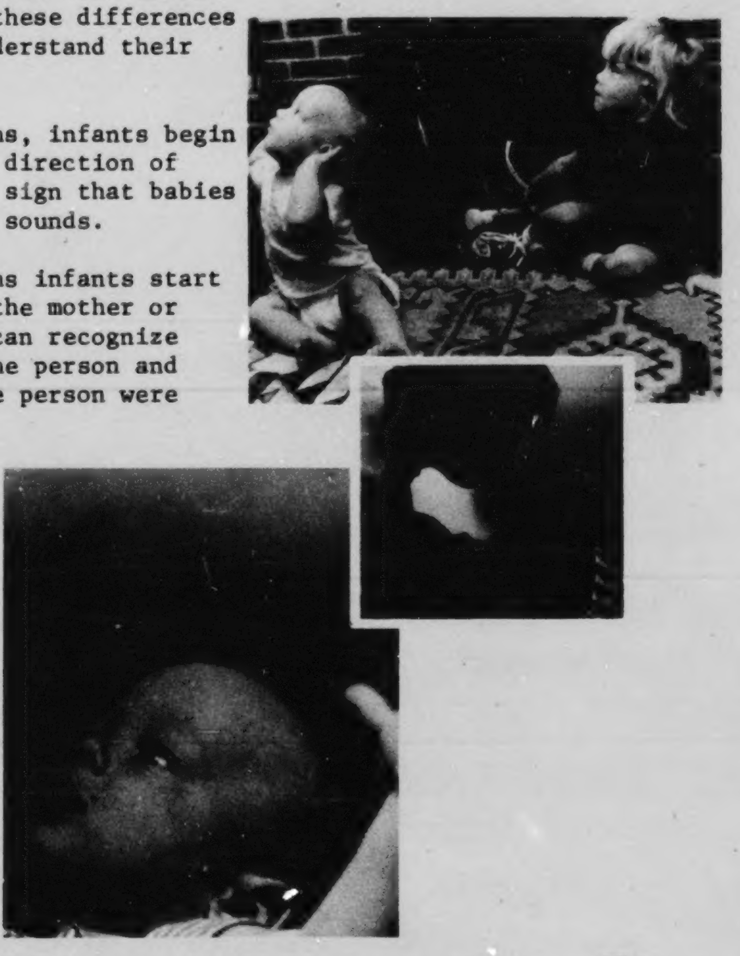
From Birth To Six Months

Infants are born with the ability to make sounds. During the early months they make many different noises and sounds. By three or four months they frequently make noises during play or blow bubbles using the saliva in their mouths.

. Almost from the moment of birth, babies cry differently when they are hungry, wet, in pain, or upset. Usually the mother or adult careperson who is with the infant most of the time can hear these differences in crying and learns to understand their meaning.

. By three-and-one-half months, infants begin to turn their heads in the direction of sounds. This is the first sign that babies are hearing differences in sounds.

. Between four and five months infants start to recognize the voice of the mother or primary careperson. They can recognize the voice without seeing the person and may smile and coo as if the person were there.



6-12

From Six To Twelve Months

At around six months babies begin to make sounds that sound like words--Da-da, ma-ma, and bye-bye are some of the first recognizable sounds. The parents think the baby is beginning to talk. Their excitement and smiles encourage the baby to make the sounds again and again.

In this period babies will stop what they are doing and listen to others talking. However, their attention is very short. They begin to react to and understand some simple familiar words such as bye-bye, no, mama, daddy. This is the beginning of language understanding.

As babies understand more language, they are able to follow simple commands, such as "Stop," "Look," "Come here," or "No-No." These commands are learned first because babies hear them frequently.

Around their first birthday, children begin to say simple, single words like "no" or "mama" clearly and with definite purpose. These words are used correctly and are not just accidental sounds being repeated.

Children recognize names of familiar objects, such as bed, bottle, car, or cat during this period. They are also able to match objects with names and are very pleased with this new ability.

They continue to learn new, simple words. Frequently they use a single word to mean a complete thought. "Milk" for example, may mean "I want more milk," or "I see the milk."

After children learn single words, they begin to string two words together such as "all gone," "me go," or "mommy sock." Again these simple statements may mean a complete thought, although they are made up of only a few words.

This is a most important period for language development. The more new words children hear, the more rapidly they learn to talk. However, new words usually need to be repeated many times before children understand them.

Learning and saying new words are fun for children. They enjoy their new ability to imitate others. They repeat words over and over again until they sound right to them or until the words bring the right action from adults or others.

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

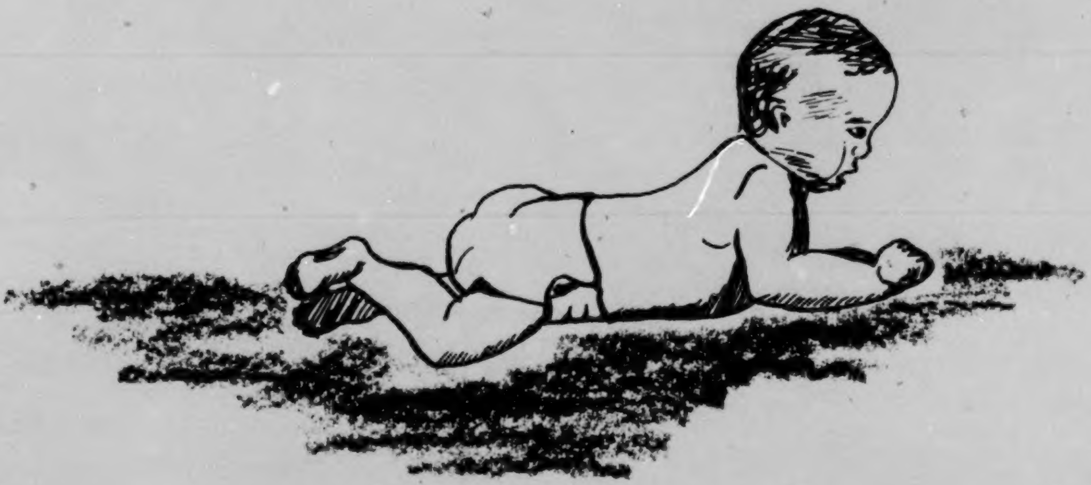
From Birth To Six Months

Newborn babies are not social beings. Their main concern is with being comfortable. Discomfort such as stomach pain, hunger, wetness, etc., is quickly communicated the only way they know--through crying. Holding babies is one of the best ways to comfort them and give them a feeling of being loved and cared for.

Between the second and third month, most babies will smile when talked to or touched. These first smiles are exciting and should be encouraged and enjoyed by both the child and the adult. They also begin to be interested in mirrors. The child is especially amused by his or her own image because it moves when the baby does, and accepted fact to adults but new and fascinating to the infant.

Around four months, babies begin to laugh aloud when encouraged and played with by an adult. As infants become more aware of others and enjoy being with them, they will cry when left alone or put down. They feel a need to be with others.

As early as six months of age, some babies will recognize and respond to people they know and will turn away or cry when strangers hold them. This is normal, and the child will eventually respond to others in a more friendly manner.



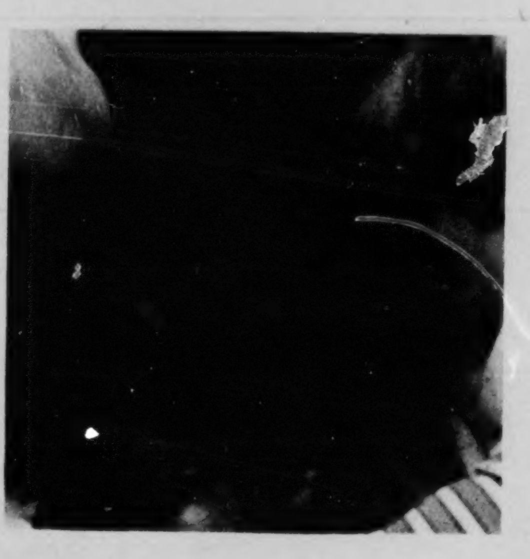
6-12

From Six To Twelve Months

Babies become increasingly aware of others in this period. They begin to enjoy playing pat-a-cake and peek-a-boo games, and they also enjoy the physical touching, attention, and the fun of seeing something that is gone reappear.

At this age babies continue to be anxious when strangers try to hold or play with them. They are particularly attached to the person who takes care of them most often. This relationship is important in establishing a sense of security, and they may cry and become upset when separated from a familiar adult.

Infants are aware of familiar or favorite toys as well as people. When a toy is taken away or is not in sight, they often become upset and cry. Sometimes they will play with other people by offering a toy or piece of food and then keeping it or taking it back. Although babies like playing with other's, they really do not know how to let go of the object. As they become more sociable, they soon learn when they are pleasing others. They will continue an activity that people laugh at or seem pleased about.



12-18

From Twelve To Eighteen Months

By this time, youngsters are able to offer something to an adult and let go of it. They especially enjoy rolling or throwing a a ball to an adult. They also like to play simple games, although they lose interest quickly.

Babies at this age get into everything. To fulfill their natural need to learn they explore everything around them. Among other things, this leads to learning about the word "no" and discipline from adults.

A year-old child begins to imitate adults, copying good things as well as bad. Imitating is an important stage in the child's development and shows an awareness of the world.

At this age babies enjoy being with others and are often just as happy to watch as to play. They have no idea of how to play with other children of the same age, and may push or shove another child or grab a toy away.

II WHAT CHILDREN NEED FROM ADULTS

Physical, mental, language, and social development are interwoven during this early period. Providing a great deal of loving care and many opportunities for learning are the most important ways for adults to help young children.

From Birth To Six Months

Infants need to feel loved and cared for. Holding, touching, and talking to them frequently throughout the day are important ways of showing affection. For feeding, babies should be held, talked to, and patted. Propping a bottle up in a crib is not only dangerous, but also deprives infants of the adult attention which is necessary for security and for learning.

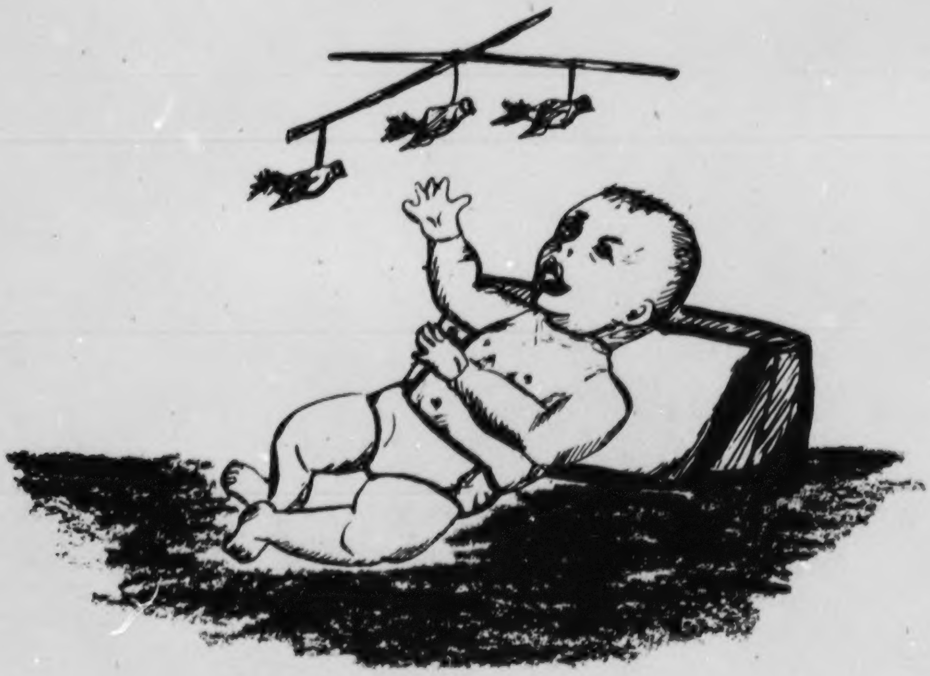
The cries of an infant usually signal that something is wrong. Check on the baby immediately. Letting an infant cry it out is not a good idea. Sometimes older babies do become demanding, but infants usually cry because they are hungry, in pain, cold, or wet. Colic pains may also cause crying, but again, infants need the security of holding and care rather than being left alone.

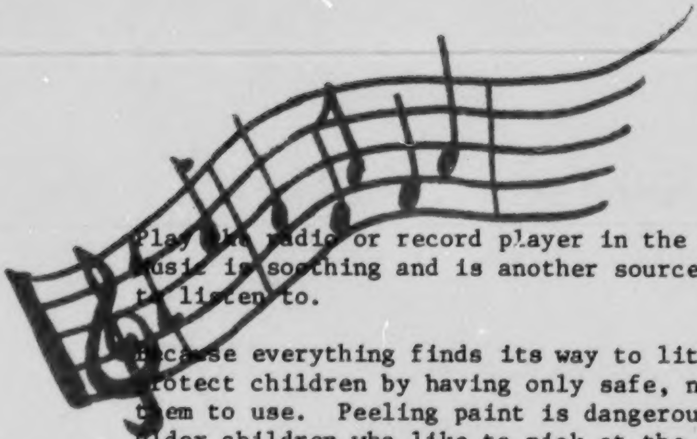
When lifting or holding an infant, adults should be careful to support the baby's head. Infants should be held by older children only with the assistance of an adult. Babies' heads are large in proportion to the rest of their bodies, and it takes time for them to develop control of the head.

Play with older infants by shaking a small object to get their attention and then slowly moving it. Holding an object about 12 to 18 inches from their eyes, and slowly moving it will help them learn to follow objects with their eyes.

Encourage infants to use their eyes and hands. Place a mobile or brightly colored object over the crib. Infants as young as three and four weeks enjoy watching things. As they get older, they will want to touch and pull any object within reach.

Give infants a change of scenery by moving them to a different room or different part of the room during the day. Keep them in a room with you or with others while they are awake. Infants need to hear the sounds and words of others in order to develop language. Talk to them as you feed, wash, dress, and change them. The children may not understand what you are saying, but they are hearing sounds and words which are the basis for their eventual learning to talk.





Play the radio or record player in the room where the infant is. Music is soothing and is another source of sounds for the baby to listen to.

Because everything finds its way to little mouths at this age, protect children by having only safe, non-toxic objects for them to use. Peeling paint is dangerous to infants as well as older children who like to pick at the paint and eat it. Choose toys that respond to the infant, toys that rattle, ring, squeak, play music, when the infant shakes or pokes at or pulls them.

To encourage movement, dress infants in comfortable, loose-fitting clothes that allow free movements.

To encourage head control, place infants on their stomach for a part of the time. Babies who lie on their backs too much will be slower in developing head control.

Take babies out of the playpen or crib for a part of each day. Put them in a safe area on the floor to give them a chance to move around.

6-12

From Six To Twelve Months

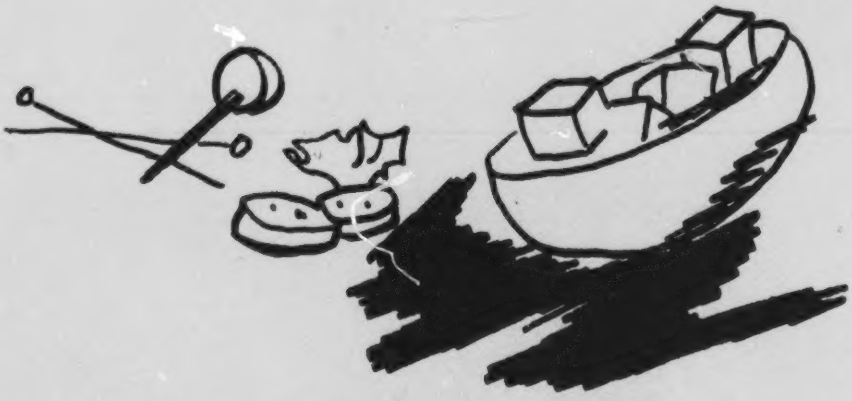
At this age, babies shake objects, throw them, bang them, and put them in their mouths. It is important to choose toys that cannot hurt them. Give them safe objects of different sizes, textures, and shapes to play with.

It is also important to keep safe or dangerous things off the floor. At this age babies are fascinated by anything that they can pick up--dirt, pins, paper scraps. Many small objects, such as pins, can be extremely dangerous if swallowed.

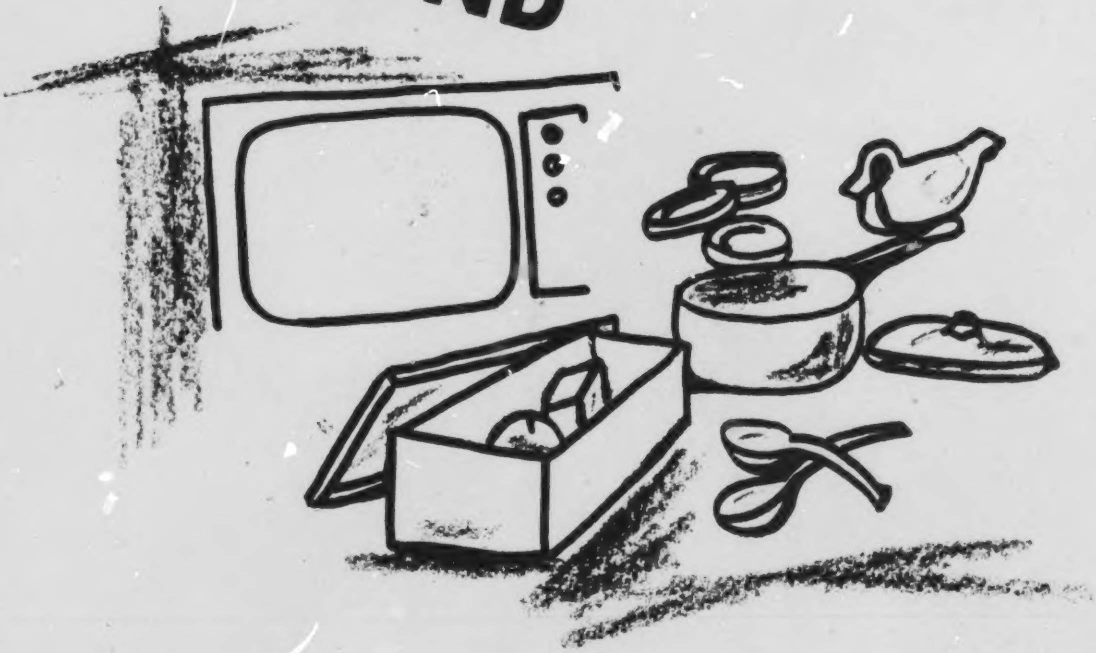
Six to twelve-month-olds are learning how to turn over, sit up, and crawl. They need space in which to move around. If they stay in a crib or playpen all the time, they will be slower in their development. To encourage their development, pick babies up, gently bounce them on your lap or on a soft pillow. Place objects on the floor in front of them, but just out of reach. Then encourage them to move toward and grasp the object.

To help babies learn to use their hands and eyes, play reaching games with them. Tie an object to a piece of string and swing it slowly in front of the baby. Encourage the baby to catch or grab the moving object. Babies this age enjoy putting things into bowls or boxes and then dumping them out (give the baby a container to put small things such as blocks into). This play helps them learn about various objects and develop better motor skills.

Accident prevention is critical. Keep all poisonous household cleaners, sharp objects, and other dangerous materials out of children's reach. As babies move around more and explore everything, they can easily get into things that might hurt them.



TALK SOUND MOVEMENT



Talk to babies frequently throughout the day while feeding, dressing, and bathing them. This is a critical period for hearing words spoken again and again, and though they may not understand the words, they will respond happily to a pleasant voice. Listening to music or the TV for short periods of the day also will increase their listening skills.

Give babies toys that make noise. Music boxes or musical toys are fine, but you can also make sound toys by stringing jar lids together on a string, putting objects in a can or box with a lid for shaking, or giving the child spoons and a pan on which to bang. Children also like toys that move, wiggle, rock, roll, or bounce.

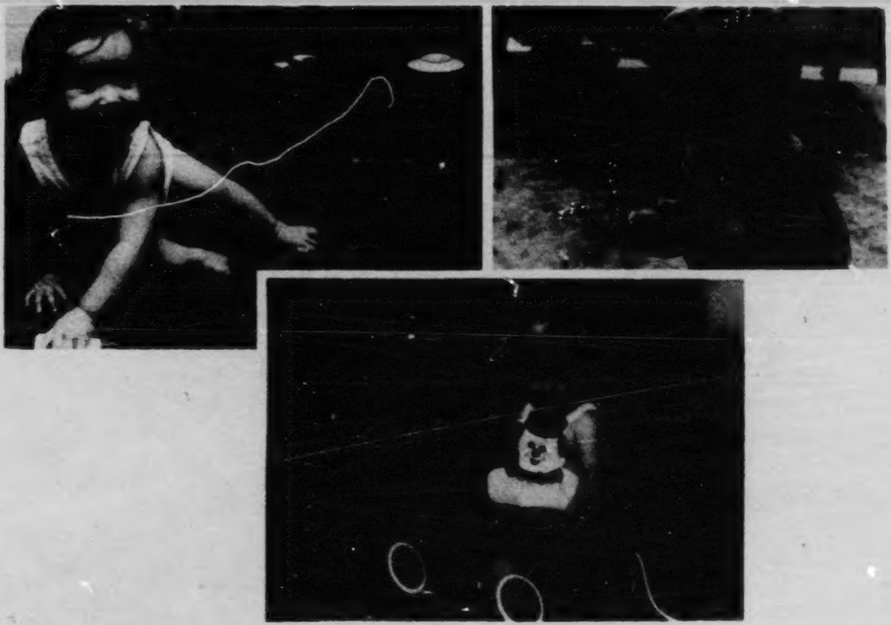
12-18

From Twelve to Eighteen Months

Children of this age need a lot of safe space for moving about and for walking and standing. Since it is difficult for them to understand or remember which things they should not touch, it is best to remove breakable lamps and other objects out of their reach. They are eager to explore and learn about the world, and need adult encouragement to do so.

Youngsters increasingly enjoy playing outdoors. They delight in spending hours practicing walking, climbing, and moving in all directions. Wheel toys, which children can scoot around by moving their feet, provide both fun and good exercise.

Twelve-to-18-month-olds like to do what others do. They enjoy playing with smaller models of adult objects, such as toy dishes, brooms, trucks, and shoes. Toys do not have to be expensive or even storebought. Children also enjoy playing with pots and pans, spoons and plastic bowls, and boxes which they can stack.



TOYS

Children's toys should be unbreakable and include objects of different sizes. Be sure that these have no sharp edges or pieces that can be pulled off and swallowed. Small, lightweight, plastic toys are dangerous as children can bite off a piece of the plastic. Rubber or heavy plastic toys are better.

During this period children are beginning to name objects and use words and sounds. Encourage children to talk by praising their efforts. Talk to them about what you are doing, the toys they are using, what they are doing. Speak slowly and distinctly to help them understand more easily. Smiles and pats are very good ways of encouraging talking. Sing to the children, play games like "peek-a-boo, "pat a cake," and "hide and seek."

Simple storybooks with only one or two lines on a page can be read to and enjoyed by 12-to 18-month-olds. You can teach children at this age to point to a picture, name it, and talk about it. Then ask a child to point to the pictured object. If you have a camera, you can make a personalized storybook for a child. Take pictures of the child and some favorite toys. Mount the pictures on heavy cardboard or in a photo book. Show the child the pictures, naming and describing them. Youngsters enjoy stories and pictures of themselves.

Once Upon
a time

SAFETY

Safety is especially critical for young children. Babies are active, curious, and into everything, especially when they begin walking. They have no sense of danger. Particularly dangerous are household cleaning materials and other poisons which they may get into. In learning to walk and climb, children are able to get into places they couldn't reach before. It is the parents' duty to provide the protection and supervision youngsters need. The importance of safety and accident prevention cannot be overstressed. The first module of this training series, Safety Precautions, covers the many things that may happen to children of this age and things you can do to prevent accidents.

PROBLEMS

IDENTIFYING AND HANDLING PROBLEMS

Frequent medical checkups are essential for the child from birth through eighteen months. Sometimes little ones have problems that can be identified only by a physician. These problems often can be corrected if they are identified early, but if allowed to go unchecked, they can result in handicapping conditions which may last a lifetime. For example, legs which turn in excessively can be corrected through proper shoes and braces. It is important that such a problem is identified and corrected early.

The following checklist identifies specific things to look for in children ages birth to 18 months. Included are some suggestions on what to do if anything seems to be unusual or wrong.

In general, there are some steps which must always be taken when you notice a problem. If you are a day home mother or work in a child care center, you should first of all check with the mother or legal guardian, describe your observations and suggest that the child be seen by a nurse or a physician. If you are a foster parent or legal guardian, you should contact the physician. If you do not have a family physician or if this would present a financial burden, ask the licensing worker or case worker or the local health department for help.

From Birth To Six Months

In an infant who is under six months old, be alert for the following indications of possible problems and have the child checked by a physician:

Extreme crying and fussiness

Some crying and fussing is normal. However, if an infant cannot be quieted by changes in scenery, diaper change, feeding, or holding, there may be a physical or emotional problem which is causing the crying.

Lack of head control

If the infant over nine months old has trouble holding the head up or keeping it still, the child may have a physical problem.

Excessive choking or vomiting while feeding

Babies usually eat well unless there is a physical problem. Minor spitting up is normal, but vomitus landing 2 feet from the child requires evaluation.

Lack of visual response

If a child does not pay attention to things seen or is unable to follow an object with the eyes, the child may have a vision problem.

No response or reaction to sound

Listen and watch for the infant's reactions to sounds. An infant who does not react to medium or loud sounds and noises, who does not seem to recognize the mother or primary caregiver's voice, or who seems to stop making sounds, may have a hearing loss which is difficult to detect.

From Six To Twelve Months

Six- to twelve-month-olds should be interested in the world around them, beginning to sit and crawl and respond to adult voices. Be alert for the following indications of possible problems and have the child examined by a physician:

✓ Lack of interest or inability to sit up or attempt simple body movements

Extremely fat babies are sometimes slower to develop motor control. However, a child who seems to be unusually slow may have another physical problem.

✓ Obvious lack of awareness of sounds

Little or no response to adult voices, little or no spontaneous sounds or attempts at words, or the inability to understand very simple commands such as "no" and "come here" indicate the need for a complete physical examination. Be sure to report your observations and concerns to the parents so they can help explain the problem to the physician.

✓ Little or no interest in looking at, reaching for, picking up, or playing with toys

The ability to see and use the hands should be developed enough for playing with things by this age.

✓ Lack of interest or reaction to others, especially to the mother or primary caregiver

Sometimes children who have been moved from one place to another frequently have not developed feelings of security and attachment. The physician should examine the child to rule out the possibility of physical problems. Other help might be in terms of counseling or guidance (i.e., on abuse and neglect) for the parents and other adults who work with the child.

From Twelve To Eighteen Months

Children's development during this period depends on what they have learned before this. Each child is different and develops at a slightly different pace. However, continued problems in the following areas indicate the need for a complete physical examination:

✓ An inability to move about without assistance

By 18 months most children can stand alone and many children are walking. Some very heavy or fat babies are slower than others, but a child who by 18 months cannot stand alone or who is not trying to walk with assistance may need medical attention.

✓ Lack of energy or interest in finding out about things

Children are usually very curious. A lack of interest may be due to physical causes. Poor nutrition and hearing or visual loss are possible problems.

✓ Unusually jerky movements

Twitching or jerking sometimes occurs when children are overly tired. However, any type of jerky movements that occur repeatedly may indicate a physical problem.

✓ An inability to respond to and follow simple commands of "Stop" or "No-No"

Children who by 18 months do not respond except when yelled at or physically corrected, or who are not attempting to say any words should be carefully checked for the possibility of a hearing loss. Children with a hearing loss may not respond except when they can see the speaker's face or when things are said very loudly. Children cannot tell you that they cannot hear. You must be alert to their reactions to words and sounds to identify a hearing loss.

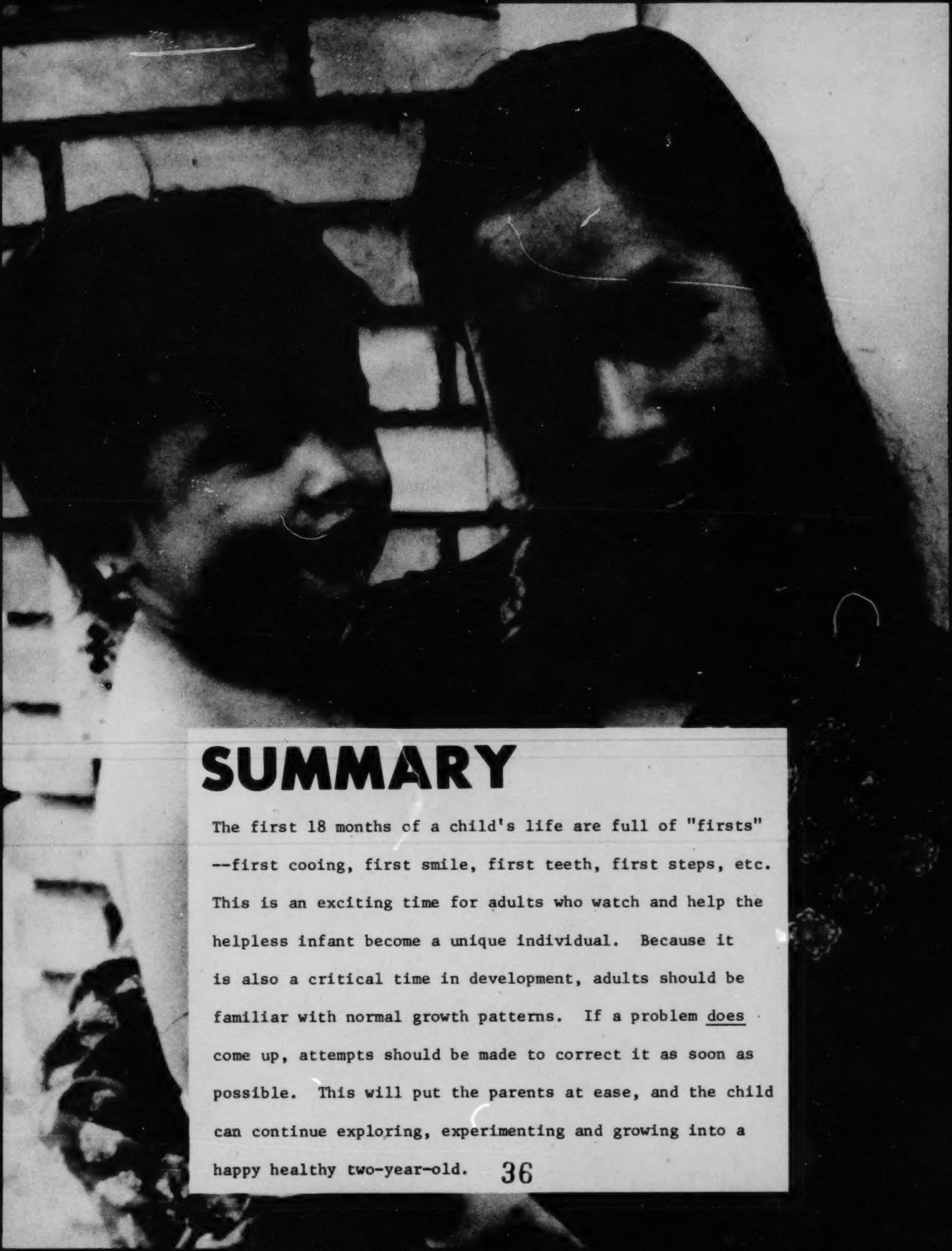
HEARING LOSS

Children who have had a number of colds, earaches, and respiratory infections may have a temporary moderate hearing loss. This too will delay their language development. Sometimes a general physician will not have the equipment for testing the hearing of a small child. Therefore, if you suspect the child is not hearing well, take the child to an otologist, a physician who specializes in problems of hearing. Temporary hearing loss may become permanent if not attended to. Additional information on hearing problems is included in Module IV, Medical Problems, and in Module II, Health Precautions.

CARE AND TREATMENT

CONCLUSION

In all cases of illness or if you suspect a problem, the child should be seen by a physician, preferably one that specializes in the care and treatment of young children. Keep in mind that a physician sees a child for only a brief time and may not be aware of symptoms which indicate a problem. Therefore, it is very important to write down any problems you may observe, noting when and under what conditions they occur.



SUMMARY

The first 18 months of a child's life are full of "firsts" --first cooing, first smile, first teeth, first steps, etc. This is an exciting time for adults who watch and help the helpless infant become a unique individual. Because it is also a critical time in development, adults should be familiar with normal growth patterns. If a problem does come up, attempts should be made to correct it as soon as possible. This will put the parents at ease, and the child can continue exploring, experimenting and growing into a happy healthy two-year-old.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Take this test both before and after studying this module to see what you have learned. An answer key is on the back.

Read each question and circle all the correct answers. THERE IS MORE THAN ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR SEVERAL OF THE MULTIPLE CHOICE ITEMS.

1. True False Developmental information about babies has become so sophisticated these days that clear steps from one stage to another have been identified.

2. True False As a baby's energy is directed toward development of a skill in one area, development in other areas may slow down or even reverse.

3. In what order do these infant developments usually occur:

___A. Gumming
___B. Development of head movement
___C. Sucking
___D. Rolling over

4. Learning control of the eyes is a part of:

A. Physical development
B. Social development
C. Emotional development
D. Development of learning and thinking

5. From six to 12 months of age most babies learn to:

A. Crawl
B. Stand alone
C. Walk alone
D. Poke with one finger
E. Use the thumb and one finger
F. Hold a bottle to drink
G. Feed self with a spoon

6. By 18 months of age most babies can:

A. Walk alone
B. Feed self with a spoon
C. Stack two blocks
D. Turn pages in a cardboard book

7. True False When a child first starts to talk, language development has begun and it is time to begin verbal stimulation.

8. True False It is all right to leave an infant alone to cry it out when you can tell by the tone of the cry that nothing is seriously wrong.

9. True False By 12-18 months of age you can teach children to point to a picture, name it and talk about it.

10. True False Learning to make general movements with hands, arms, head, feet and legs is a part of mental development.

11. True False Most babies will not be able to reach skillfully for what they want until they are about nine months old.

12. True False Around seven or eight months, infants drop things on the floor just for the reaction they get from adults.

13. True False From the minute they are born, babies are social beings.

14. True False By 18 months of age, most children know how to play with other children.

15. True False By 18 months of age, most children can remember what things they should not touch.

1. False
2. True
3. C, A, B, D
4. A, D
5. A, D, E, F
6. All
7. False
8. False
9. True
10. True
11. False
12. False
13. False
14. False
15. False

ANSWER KEY

Module VII

THE GROWING CHILD

FROM 18 MONTHS TO THREE YEARS

Module VII

THE GROWING CHILD

From 18 Months to Three Years

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THE GROWING CHILD

From 18 Months to Three Years

A year's difference in age makes little difference in the way adults act, but in young children, the difference a year makes is almost unbelievable. The tiny baby who needed physical support and nearly constant care is, at 18 months, a child who can toddle about, get into all kinds of things, and make demands known in more ways than crying. Adults often become worn out and impatient during this period, for it is a time when children need a great deal of adult patience and attention. Toddlers are extremely active, and it is physically exhausting to keep up with them.

This toddling stage begins at different times for different children. It is a time of still being babies yet beginning to be children, a time of learning to get about with ease and skill and of learning to talk. And it is a time of learning how to get along with other people. For many, it is a period of uneven growth. Some children develop physical and language skills fairly evenly; others do not. Some learn to walk easily and early before they even try to talk while others learn to talk well before walking. Over the months this evens out, and by age three most children can walk well and can talk in short phrases or sentences.

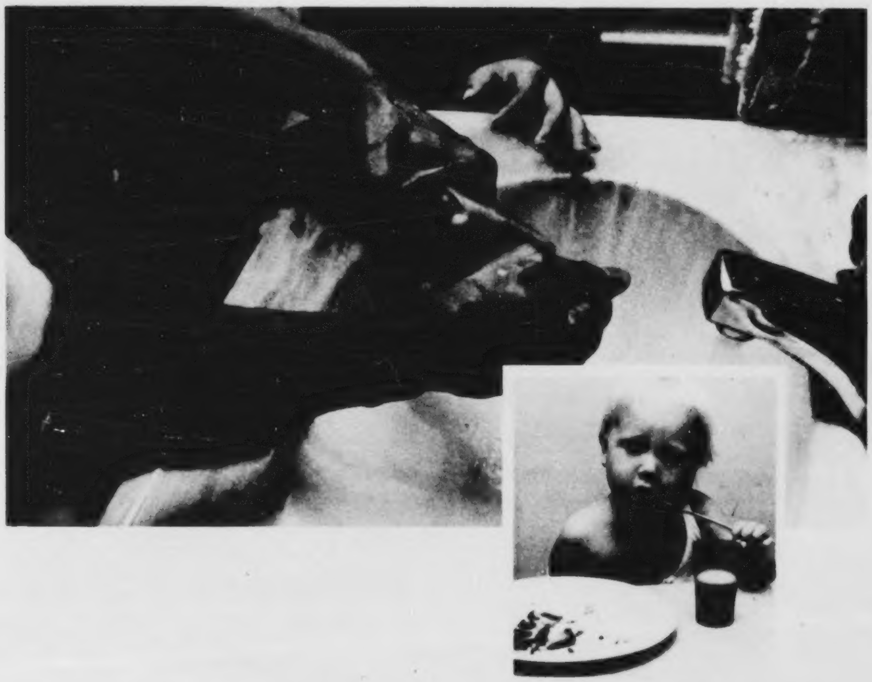
Because development is often uneven, the following sections on Physical, Mental, Language, and Social-Emotional development are not divided by ages. The point at which children enter this stage of development influences the progress they make in this period. As an adult working with children under two years of age, you may want to review the module on the child from birth through 18 months as well. Those who work with children approaching three years should also review the module on children from ages three through five.

I WHAT TO EXPECT

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Some children start walking as early as nine or ten months, others not until 18 months or even a little older. It is perfectly normal to start any time within this age range. Toddlers begin walking in about the wame way--feet wide apart, unsure of themselves, tummies sticking out, arms waving as they try to keep their balance. They fall down with a plop every few steps, especially if they try to go faster or turn around, then pull themselves up to try all over again. At first they walk just for the sake of walking. Usually by age two they've mastered the trick, and they walk to get where they want to go.

Once toddlers get about on ther own, they become very active, moving quickly from one thing to another. Something new will usually catch their attention, and they're off after a bright color, a new toy--almost anything at all. They explore anything they can reach--wastebaskets, drawers, light plugs, the dog's dish. A playpen or one room isn't space enough for them, and they want to move around outdoors too. They like to push and pull things and drag them around, to play with sand and dirt and water, to reach for things, to try to climb up steps or drawers or anything else that is handy. The hand-eye coordination of toddlers is still fairly undeveloped. They spend most of their waking time using their large muscles.



Between 18 and 24 months children learn to walk forward and sideways, sit down easily in a small chair, and climb into a big "grown-up" chair. By the time they are two or two-and-a-half most children can kick a ball, jump up and down in one place, and walk down stairs holding an adult's hand or a banister.

By the time children are two-and-a-half or three, their legs are longer and they can run about easily. They've learned to walk on tiptoes, to stand on one foot for a few seconds, and to ride a tricycle. They put on simple clothes, such as pants and sweaters, by themselves and even undo large buttons and zippers. With a little help they can wash and dry their hands. Eating is less of a mess. Many can use a spoon and a cup and get through a meal with only an occasional "accident."

Toddlers like to put pegs in a pegboard and boxes inside one another. They also like to play with blocks, building towers until gravity or the two-year-old brings the tower down. And two or two-and-a-half-year-olds are independent. They undress themselves and try to feed themselves, usually making a mess of it, but trying hard.

They love to imitate. They try to comb their hair, brush their teeth, read a book, and do other grown-up things. They aren't always successful, but they enjoy the fun of trying.

EATING

Babies generally eat whatever is given them. Two-year-olds, however, are much more vocal about what they like and don't like to eat. One thing most of them agree on is that they don't like their food mixed together. They want each food separate, and they like food they can pick up and eat with their fingers. They generally eat less than they did as infants, gaining only three to five pounds between one and two and again between two and three. Even though they do not eat very much, it is important that they have a well-balanced diet.

GROWTH

As babies become able to do more and more things, they also change in the way they look. By the time they are three years old they usually have all of their temporary, or baby, teeth. Even babies who adults thought would always be bald begin to grow thicker and longer hair.

Toddlers need plenty of sleep to give them the energy to play and to grow strong and healthy. They may sleep about 12 hours a night and also take an afternoon nap for an hour or two. As they grow, they can play for a longer time without getting tired.

Growth in height is steady between 18 months and three years, on the average about four inches a year, with girls developing faster than boys. You can usually figure out, more or less, how tall children will eventually be by doubling a girl's height at the age of two, and a boy's at two-and-a-half.

Toilet training begins for most toddlers at this stage of development. To succeed they must be developed mentally enough to understand what is expected of them and physically enough to control their muscles. Children usually learn bowel training first, beginning around 18 months. More often than not, it is really the mother who is trained, putting her child on the potty at the right times, but the child learns what is expected this way. Pretty soon he or she will give the signal. Children learn to keep dry between two and three, first in the daytime and then at night. Many will have "accidents" for another year or two, especially if they are tired or excited or so wrapped up in play that they don't think about going to the bathroom until it is too late.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

While toddlers are busy exploring their physical world, developing their muscles, and learning how to get around standing upright instead of crawling on all fours, they are also developing mentally.

Toddlers learn quickly and develop rapidly. Around the time that they learn to talk, they begin to remember where they put things, or where certain things are kept, like a ball or the cookie jar. They learn to go around objects instead of running into them or trying to get over them. They imitate almost everything that catches their attention, especially what other children and grown-ups are doing. They begin to pretend. After brushing their hair, or trying to, the brush may become an airplane or a truck. Their imagination is growing along with everything else.

2-2 1/2

Between two and two-and-a-half youngsters can listen to longer stories, and they like to name things they see in the pictures. They can follow simple directions, such as, "Put the toys in the box" or "Get your sweater." They can put more words together, even though they don't yet speak in full sentences, and they begin to ask questions. At first they ask "why" and "what's dat" without really caring about the answers, but by the time they are three, they usually want to know. Three-year-olds can also tell something about the objects they see in pictures, and they can follow more than one direction at a time, such as "Get the ball and close the door." And they love to pretend. They pretend to hide by covering their eyes, playing "where is baby," and they're so pleased when adults play with them. They may pretend to be asleep or to use the telephone. Their imagination takes in everything they see around them. They can match simple shapes, like squares and circles, and can name objects like a bottle or a car and know what they are for. By 18 months, babies become toddlers who make their wants known and get around in a world they are learning more and more about.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

The babbling sounds babies make are the beginning of language. Between 18 months and two years, children begin using the sounds to form words. Their first words name people and things around them: mama, dada, doggie, cookie, ball. They can make themselves understood, at least within the family, and get their needs met by pointing and saying one or two words. For example, a child who wants water can point and say "wawa."

Children learn to speak in more or less the same way, but they learn to do it at different ages. Some don't start talking until they can walk and get around easily. Others talk first, then walk, and still others learn to do both at the same time. Each child has his or her own learning pace and style. One two-year-old may say only half a dozen words, while another may say more words than anyone can count.

Some children have so much trouble being understood that they become frustrated and unhappy. Others, especially in large families, seem to have their needs met without asking for anything, so they don't need to talk as soon as other two-year-olds.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

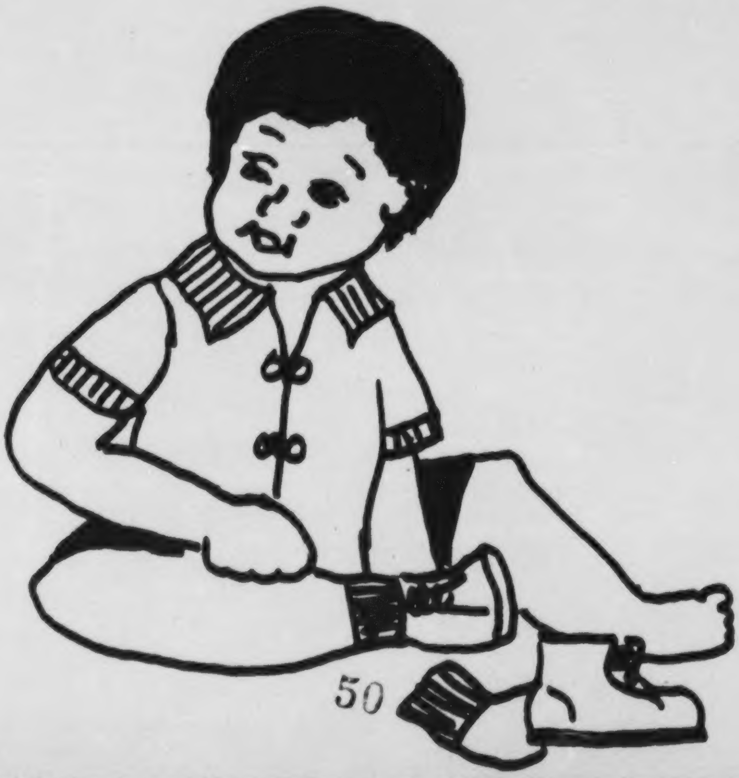
As children stretch and grow both physically and mentally, they gradually gain more control of the little world around them. Babies stay where adults put them, but toddlers can get around by themselves, getting into places and things where they shouldn't always be. What's more, they show that they have a will of their own and that they don't want adults to get in their way. Because they don't know what might hurt them or how they should behave, they keep hearing "no" from parents, from brothers and sisters, and from other adult caregivers. This can lead to a battle of wills between parents and their 18-month- to two-year-old children.

A number of things are typical of children in this age range. They may begin to throw temper tantrums if they are frustrated, to kick and scream if a toy is taken away or if they have to stop playing and come inside. Usually by around two-and-a-half they can talk well enough to say they are angry. Once they can say what's wrong, they usually no longer need to throw tantrums.

NOW!

Young children have no understanding of time. All days are pretty much alike. Tomorrow and yesterday don't exist, only "now." A promise of "tomorrow" translates as "never." "Hurry up" means nothing to two-year-olds. Small children will take what seems like forever to put on one shoe, while the parent or caregiver gets more and more impatient and anxious to get on with things. At this age youngsters aren't deliberately being slow, but they don't run on "adult" time. They don't even know what it means.

Around 18 months, children start becoming more independent. They try to dress and feed themselves and copy other things adults do. With adults' encouragement and patience, they will improve their skills a great deal between the ages of 18 months and three years. When toddlers first start walking, they may wander off and not look back at the parent or caregiver, or even join a group of strangers down the block. By two, though, they probably will look back every few minutes to make sure the adult is there, or run back just to touch or hug before running off again. This makes it easier for the adult to keep an eye on the two- or three-year-old. It also helps children develop a sense of security in "checking back" and finding the caregiver is still there. This security is an important part of their development. It is the beginning of the trust that will help them continue to learn and explore.



FEAR!

Many children develop fears at this age. They may be frightened by sudden or loud noises, such as a clap of thunder or a vacuum cleaner. They may become afraid of being alone at bedtime, or fear that if adults leave they will never come back. This can be a special problem with children who have not had a happy, secure home. They have not learned to trust adults. These children may also be afraid that if they have been bad the caregiver will not let them stay. Babies who would go to anybody often around the age of two begin to be afraid of strangers. When an adult comes into the room, they may stop what they are doing and stare at the person as if to size him up. Most children will outgrow this shyness or hesitancy in a few months if adults are patient and don't make a fuss about it.

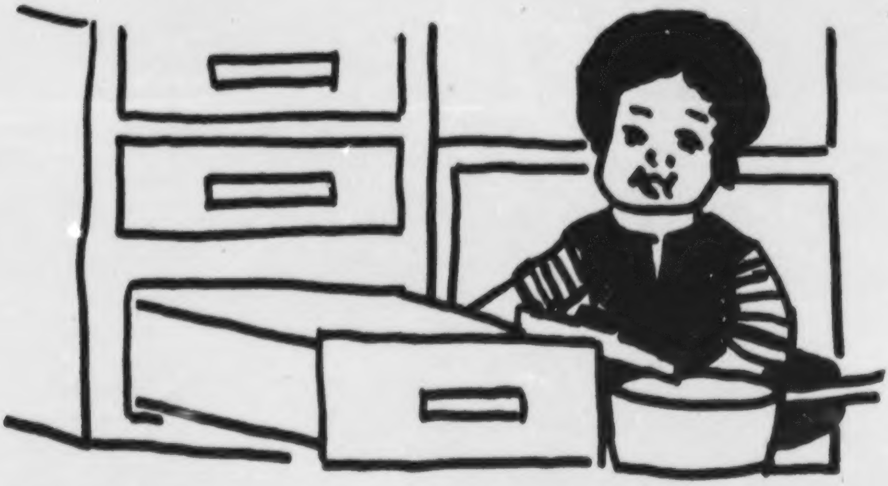
Babies depend entirely on adults for companionship. Two-year-olds are becoming interested in other children. They don't know how to play with others yet, but they like to play alongside them. Each plays by himself but in the company of the other. There is no need to be upset if children shove one another or one child grabs another's toys. Children this age haven't learned how to share. They seem to think that if they give up a toy or cookie, they will never get it back. Sometimes they won't let go of their mother but cling to her and don't want to be out of her sight. They usually outgrow this stage quickly, especially if the adult gives them comfort, love, and the reassurance that even if she has to leave, she'll come back soon. Scolding and upsetting frightened children only makes matters worse. By two-and-a-half or three, most children are willing to leave their mothers' side for awhile to play with other children. They begin to share and take turns, making things more enjoyable for themselves as well as for their adult caregivers.

II WHAT CHILDREN NEED FROM ADULTS

It is easy to become overprotective of small children. They still seem like babies, even though they can do so many more things. They will have a lot of falls, bumps, and bruises. Parents and other adult caregivers have to be as brave as the two-year-olds and let them explore. What adults can do is make the exploration as safe and pleasurable for the child as possible, with generous doses of patience and love.

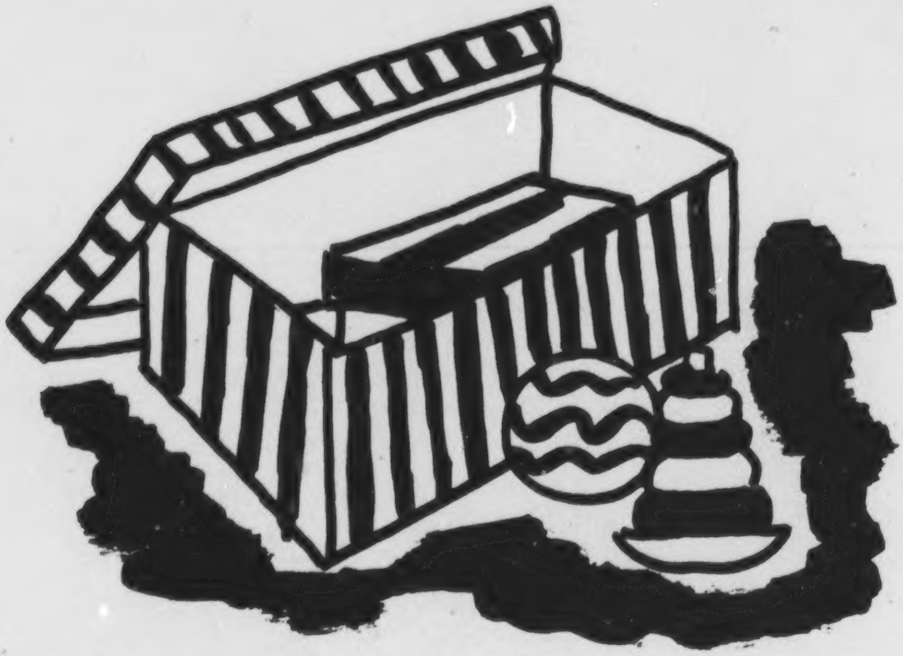
PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is hard to stop a healthy child from learning to walk and eagerly exploring. Encourage toddlers. Give them a hand when they need it, like going up and down stairs, until they can manage by themselves. Give them space to get around, but be sure it's safe space. Put a barricade across steps to prevent falls. Move furniture with sharp edges out of the way. "Child proof" rooms as much as possible, putting breakables out of reach. Leave things that they can't hurt and that can't hurt them in easy-to-reach spots. For instance, put pots and lids in a bottom drawer in the kitchen where children can safely reach them. Opening and closing the drawer will be as much fun for them as the pots and pans! That is only one example of "instant" toys for children this age.



There are many inexpensive materials that can give youngsters hours of enjoyment and development. Little children often find an empty box more intriguing than the fancy gift that was inside it. Because youngsters often put things in their mouths, it is important that all toys are large enough so that children can't swallow them. Toys should not contain anything poisonous, and should not be painted with a lead-based paint.

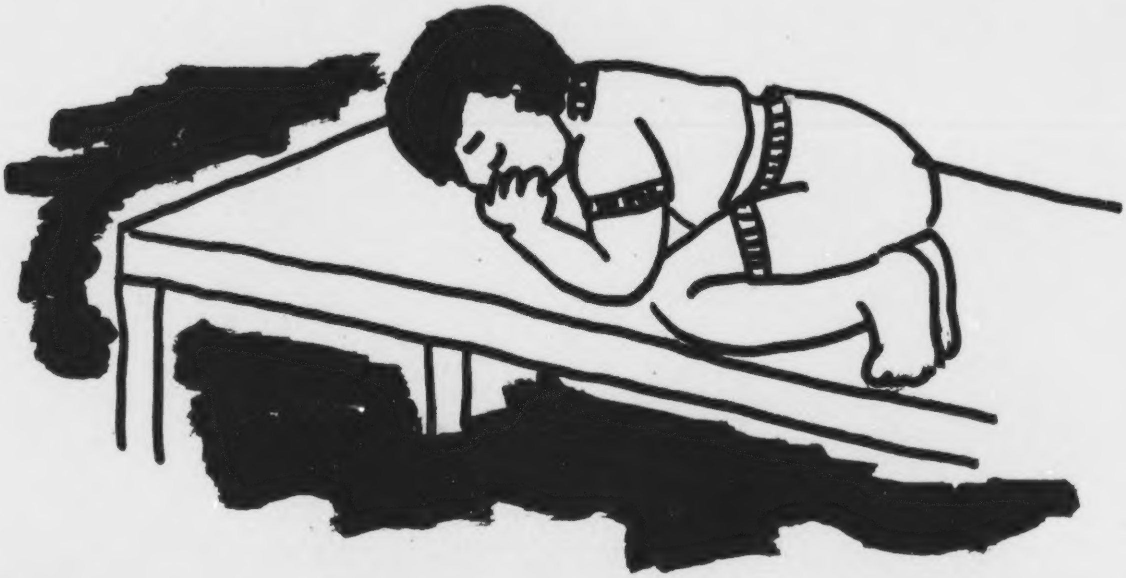
Don't worry if children this age eat less than they did when they were infants. It is perfectly normal. Forcing children to eat will probably only make them rebel. Children won't feel like eating when they are yelled at or ordered and corrected all the time. Sometimes young children may want to eat only one thing--bananas at every meal, or only rice--but this phase usually passes quickly. The important thing is to offer a good balanced diet to give active growing children the nourishment they need. It is also important to make mealtime enjoyable for everyone.



SLEEP

Sleep is important for growing children. Toddlers need a nap in the middle of the day and a full night's sleep. If they argue and get upset at nap time, let them play quietly on their beds, looking at pictures, listening to records, or just resting. They may fall asleep after all. Most children fuss at bedtime now and then. However, if they fuss quite a lot, it may be because they need either more or less sleep. Perhaps they are more active than they used to be. If they are overtired, they should go to bed earlier. Or maybe they have a long nap in the afternoon and are not ready for bed as early as they used to be. Try changing their bedtime to see if a half hour earlier or later makes a difference.

Children also like a set routine at bedtime. This might include telling a story. It can be a very short one about something they did that day, or a new puppy down the block, or something just as simple and appealing. A hug from each adult in the family, or taking a special stuffed animal or small blanket, or even rag, to bed can be routine enough. They will outgrow the routine eventually, but meanwhile it gives them the security they need. This is especially true when youngsters have been moved from one home to another. They really may be afraid that the adult caring for them will be gone in the morning.



ACCIDENTS

Encourage children to feed and dress themselves. Between 18-month- through three-year-olds may need some help learning to do these things, but encouragement and patience will make learning quicker and more enjoyable for everyone. Scolding and criticizing a two-year-old struggling with a button and button hole can discourage a very important learning process.

Many children are hurt in accidents at home, yet many home accidents could be prevented. Some accidents could be eliminated by removing their causes, while others could be prevented by keeping in mind that toddlers need constant attention. They may not look like they can move quickly, but they can get into things and places where they don't belong at a moment's notice. Since toddlers have more energy than sense, make sure that there is nothing around the house that might hurt them. Keep scissors, knives, and other sharp objects out of reach. Put poisons, such as cleaning materials and bug sprays in locked cupboards or out of reach. And don't forget that toddlers can climb surprisingly high.

MENTAL AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Mental development and langauge development blend together during this period. The more a child sees, hears, touches, and does, the more he or she has to think and talk about. The more a child is able to say, the better able he or she is to remember and think about things. Physical development also interrelates with mental and language development. Physical development, particularly learning to walk, gives a child the means to explore and learn about new things.

Adults can help children develop by providing places to explore, things to touch and see, and many sounds and words to hear. Learning and language go together. When a child discovers some new object, adults can help the child learn new words to understand and describe what they see and touch. For example, "Apple, that's an apple. You can eat it. Good...it tastes good."

There are several ways in which you can help children learn to talk. Speak to them clearly and distinctly in short sentences. Don't talk too fast or use baby talk. Give them a good example to follow, for they will imitate what they hear.

READING

Read to children, pointing to familiar objects in the pictures. Begin with pictures of only one or two objects and simply talk about them. As their attention increases, toddlers like to listen to simple stories, rhymes, and songs. Reading to little children gives them a chance to hear more words and helps them match words with objects and actions. Point out and name objects and actions in the house and yard, too. Get in the habit of talking about routine things--trips to the grocery store, the meal being cooked, flowers in the yard, or an airplane overhead. Commonplace things are new and fascinating to young children.

Don't keep telling children to be quiet or "shut up." Encourage their efforts at talking, even if the efforts don't sound like words to you. Sounds are the beginning of speech and from sounds the child makes words.

Don't keep correcting a child's speech. The important thing for young children is to try to talk as best they can. Gradually they will learn to pronounce words correctly and to speak in sentences. But this takes time. The more pleased adults are with the child's first efforts at talking, no matter how funny they might sound, the quicker the child will begin to speak more clearly.

Youngsters need support and encouragement. They need to feel close to their parents or other adult caregivers so that they will be free to learn and grow. Love, affection, and support are the most important ingredients for learning in a young child.

This period of learning to understand and learning to talk is critical, for it forms the basis for later learning. The bubbling, exploring child who is rewarded with words of encouragement and adult attention will grow into an independent learner. The one who is ignored, severely punished, or who receives no adult attention may become a withdrawn unhappy child who does not try to learn.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The guidance adults give toddlers has a great deal to do with their social development. This is the time when they become aware that they are social beings, and that certain kinds of behavior are expected of them in certain situations. Love, understanding, and consistent expectations and behavior are very important in guiding young children.

Encourage children when they try to do things. Praise them and let them know that they should keep trying new things.

Help children learn to cooperate with and respect the rights of others. This may frustrate children and sometimes even make them angry, but by being kind and firm and setting reasonable limits, adults can help children gradually learn what is expected of them.

Don't become tense and anxious just because young children suddenly show they have minds of their own. Two-year-olds are often stubborn and disagreeable. This doesn't mean there is anything wrong with them, or that the caregivers have done anything wrong. Remember that toddlers can get around, but they are not old enough to be responsible for what they do. They need, and will continue to need, adults to guide them awhile longer!

NO!

Try to be patient. Sometimes children need to have the same things repeated over and over before they learn. Adults should realize everyone takes time to learn new things, and toddlers are in the process of learning many new things all at once. After all, these are little children. They are too little to reason with, and they don't like their play disturbed anymore than adults do! They don't like to be given direct and frequent orders or to be scolded. Tell them what they should do--for example, "Stop pulling Jane's hair; it hurts,"--then go on to a new activity. Make the point quickly and pleasantly.

Use a positive approach. There are times when an adult must say "No," "Don't" or "Stop." However, only saying "no" or "don't" does not tell the child what he or she should do. For example, when teaching a toddler not to run into the street, the adult must say "No" and "Don't." Streets are not the place for fun and games and children must learn streets are dangerous. In addition to saying no, the adult should say "No, don't run or play in the street. Play on the sidewalk or yard." It is never too early to show the child how and when to cross the street. For a toddler, this means only with an adult. But don't expect the toddler to remember. Never allow toddlers to play outdoors unsupervised.

Don't leave toddlers alone or with a young child. They are an adult responsibility. They can get about quickly, but they haven't learned how to handle themselves. It isn't easy to know how much freedom to give a child. Small children are ready to explore, and they should be able to, but within the limits of good sense. What they need is a combination of care and encouragement to take their first steps toward growing up. It is a good idea for an adult to keep an eye on young children so they can step in and help when they are needed.

LOVE

Day care centers are becoming more important in young children's lives as more and more mothers go to work. If day care is needed, look for a center where the staff provides warmth and encouragement and enough individual care to make the child feel wanted and loved. Of course you will look around to see that the center is clean, that nutritious lunch and snacks are served, and that the children have a chance to play and run about outdoors as well as listen to stories and play other kinds of activities indoors. Also look at how the teachers and caregivers relate to the children. Do you see teachers holding and talking with the children? Do the teachers sit or stoop down to the children's level when speaking with them? Also notice the children. Are they involved in constructive play or activities? Do they seem happy and excited about what they are doing? Some children, even if they like a day care center, will cling to a parent in the morning when they come and again when they are picked up at the end of the day. They usually stop this in time or do it only occasionally, especially when there is a change in their daily routine. It is usually a sign that the child wants to be close to the parent. Children need to be reassured that they are loved and that their parent will come back as promised.

HONESTY AT HOME

Be honest with children. Never sneak away when children must be left with another adult or a sitter. Tell the child calmly and pleasantly when you are leaving and assure him or her it isn't forever--only a few hours, or perhaps just long enough to get to the grocery store and back.

Children who have been moved from one home to another and who have lived with adults who didn't keep their word need to build a trust/faith in adults. If there seems to be a real problem, caregivers can help overcome it by showing they can be trusted. When the child is left with a sitter, for example, it might help for the foster parent to leave for a short time at first, then return. Gradually the trust will come.

Toddlers usually are very attached to their mothers. It is a good idea to encourage other trusting relationships, especially with other family members--father, grandparents, sisters and brothers, close friends. This helps children learn to love and trust other people. In this way they will have someone else to feel safe with and not be upset when the parent or caregiver has to go out. Developing basic trust is important in the healthy growth of a young child.

CORRECTION

Correct children, but don't punish them. Punishment may be an effective way of stopping disruptive behavior, but it does not teach them what is appropriate. Firm but loving guidance is helpful and necessary. If you must discipline a child, try to make the discipline relevant or in line with the behavior you want to correct. For example, if a child throws a glass of milk, handing the child a mop or sponge in a firm but controlled manner and telling the child to clean it up would be much more effective than scolding or spanking. Remember also that teasing is often inappropriate for young children. They often do not understand and may take what you say seriously.

With your love and understanding, the children in your care will grow to be loving, social preschoolers.

III IDENTIFYING AND HANDLING PROBLEMS

The period from 18 months to three years is a critical time of growth in all areas. It is also one of the most uneven periods of development. While uneven development is normal, adults should be aware of the possibility of problems, know what to look for, and learn how to handle problems that arise.

In general, there are some steps which should always be taken. If you are a day home mothere or worker or if you teach or work in a child care center, you should first of all check with the mother or legal guardian, describe your observations, and suggest that the child be seen by a nurse or a physician. If you are a foster parent or legal guardian, you should contact the physician. If you do not have a family physician or if this would present a financial burden, ask the licensing worker, case worker, or local health department for help.

Keep in mind also, that a physician sees a child for only a brief time and may not be aware of symptoms which indicate a problem. Therefore, it is very important to write down any problems that you observe, noting when they occur and under what conditions.

Following are some things to look for in children between the ages of 18 months and three years. Included are suggestions for what to do if there seems to be a problem.

PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

Many of the problems of children either correct themselves or can, with patience, be remedied in a short time. There are certain indications, however, that a child should be thoroughly examined by a physician. Some of these signs include:

- Not scooting about or exploring by the age of 2

  Not making any effort to scoot about and explore around the house and yard may indicate a physical problem.

- Acting tired and lethargic, rarely getting into things.

  Children who are like this much of the time may have a dietary deficiency or a chronic physical problem that needs attention. If they suddenly become this way, it may mean the beginning of an illness.

- Not reaching for colored objects or responding to pretty flowers or furry puppies.

  These symptoms, along with bumping into things and hesitancy in exploring, may point to a vision problem.

- Eyes don't focus together

  Needs evaluation by an ophthalmologist to determine if any serious eye problem exists.

COLDS & HEARING

. Not answering when their name is called, or reacting to sound.

A child who does not react to the doorbell or telephone ringing or when other children run noisily through the room may have a hearing problem.

. Cold, sore throat, or high fever.

Toddlers can suddenly develop colds, sore throats, and high fevers. Always check with a doctor when children seem ill or feverish. This way adults can give them the proper caré and help them recover fully and quickly.

Children develop a great deal both physically and mentally in this age period. Because of this it is especially important not to overlook what could be a serious problem. After a thorough checkup, the doctor may say there is nothing wrong, or may be able to explain what the problem is and what can be done to correct or take care of it.

MENTAL/LANGUAGE PROBLEMS

There is a wide age range in which children first begin to talk. There is no reason for alarm if a two-year-old isn't talking or a three-year-old isn't telling long stories. However, lack of speech by three may mean that something is wrong. Possible symptoms or causes include:

- Not responding to words or sounds.
- Inability to imitate words or sounds.

  This may indicate a hearing problem which can affect language development.

- Slowness in using words and understanding what is said.

  This may indicate a learning or mental problem.

Children whose families don't talk to one another except to issue orders or commands, usually are slow in learning to talk.

If there is a problem, often the doctor can do what is needed to correct it so that the child can develop more normally. Other times, the physician may recommend special care for the child or suggest the best place for the child to receive the help needed.

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SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

All young children get angry when they are stopped from doing what they want to do. Many throw temper tantrums, kick, bite, and otherwise act aggressive. This may be caused by a variety of reasons.

. Refusing to eat and making a big fuss at mealtime.

This often happens when adults demand that children eat more than they want, or by unpleasant meal times in which the rest of the family quarrels or shouts or doesn't talk at all. Actions like these can make the child tense and anxious.

. Resisting going to bed or taking a nap.

Most children fuss once in a while, but if a child screams and carries on for a long time each night, there could be a problem.

. No exploration.

Being afraid to move about and try new things, and just sitting and watching the world go by.

. Resisting toilet training.

If by age three toilet training has turned into a battle between parent and child, this should be checked.

HELP!

If there is a problem, the doctor may be able to correct it or to help you find the proper help. Keep in mind when dealing with young children that different children react to strict discipline in different ways. Don't be too severe, scolding all the time or expecting too much of a small child. Some children may become afraid to try anything new, while others may become rebellious and tense and against everything. If children are seldom praised but frequently criticized, or if they are punished or told to do the same thing again and again, they may back off from any kind of learning and cooperation.

SUMMARY

Perhaps the most important thing adults can do for young children is give love, affection, and security. Children want to know they are loved and cared for even when they have just spilled the third glass of milk at breakfast. A positive, loving attitude can go a long way in helping children develop into physically and mentally healthy people. Early experiences play an important part in the way children react to other people. It is the home and family life, the feeling of being loved and wanted, of belonging, that get children off to a good start. Children in foster homes need this love and acceptance even more than other children. They may have missed this in their earlier experiences. By consistently providing the love, acceptance, and guidance a young child needs, adult caregivers will be helping children grow into competent, happy, and successful adults.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Take this test both before and after studying this module to see what you have learned. An answer key is at the bottom.

Read each question and circle all the correct answers. THERE IS MORE THAN ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR SEVERAL OF THE MULTIPLE CHOICE ITEMS.

1. True False From 18 months to three years the development of most children is quite uneven.

2. Between 18 and 24 months children learn to:

   A. Kick a ball
   B. Sit down easily in a small chair
   C. Walk forward and sideways
   D. Jump up and down in one place
   E. Walk downstairs

3. True False When eating, most two-year-olds mix all their foods together.

4. True False Between the ages of one and three years, children eat less and gain less weight than they did as infants.

5. True False Most children have their temporary or baby teeth by the time they are two years old.

6. True False Girls develop faster than boys.

7. True False By the age of 2½ or 3 most young children are developing an understanding of time.

8. If a child rarely gets into things and shows no exploration, it could be a sign of:

   A. A physical problem
   B. A mental/language problem
   C. A social/emotional problem

9. If a child consistently does not respond to sound, it could be a sign of

   A. A physical problem
   B. A mental/language problem
   C. A social/emotional problem

ANSWER KEY

1. True
2. B, C
3. False
4. True
5. False
6. True
7. False
8. A, C
9. A, B

Module VII

THE GROWING CHILD

FROM THREE THROUGH FIVE YEARS

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1. This textbook on child growth and development covers period of infancy through adolescence. Divided into sections on infancy, preschool age child, school age child, and adolescence, each section covers various aspects such as personality, physical, intellectual, and social development. Also includes chart on common childhood diseases, immunizations. Also includes charts on number of children under age 14.

2. An excellent chapter on physical development, health and coordination of adolescents is included as well as charts on common childhood diseases, immunizations, height and weight tables, and dietary information.

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Module VII

THE GROWING CHILD

From Three Through Five Years

The years from three through five are often called the "runabout years." This is the time when children are no longer babies or toddlers, but they are not quite ready to settle down in school. Children are very busy, exploring and trying everything with never ending energy and activity. They want to learn all there is to know about their small world, and the things they see and experience in the world will be important to them when they start school. There is a lot of difference between a child who is just three and a child who is almost six--a lot of growing up.

I WHAT TO EXPECT

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children grow slowly and evenly from three through five, growing two or three inches a year and gaining three to six pounds. Three- and four-year-olds still need an afternoon nap, but they may not agree! They may not sleep. Most are content to rest or play quietly for an hour or so. Some five-year-olds have outgrown their naps, but they need a quiet time in the middle of the day. Three- to five-year-olds usually need 8 to 10 hours of sleep. Some children may need extra sleep (i.e., 11 to 12 hours), but an equal number require 8 or less (especially if they take a nap in the afternoon at a day care facility which is often 2 hours or longer). In day care settings, few children fail to nap, if a good atmosphere is set. Rest rather than sleep may be emphasized for some.

3

THREE-YEAR-OLDS

Three-year-olds can do many more things than two-year-olds. Two-year-olds are still toddlers--roly poly, cuddly, clumsy. Three-year-olds begin to lose their baby cuddliness, and they get around with fewer falls. They can climb stairs, alternating their feet, and ride a tricycle. They can feed themselves without spilling too much, pour from a pitcher, and even put on their own shoes. They've learned how to walk and run slowly and quickly and turn corners doing both. They can climb and jump and race with little awkwardness. Muscle development and hand/eye coordination isn't good enough for them to draw pictures or do other "small" things, but they love finger painting and using a medium-sized brush to make broad strokes and splashes of color on paper. Some can put large beads on strings or stack blocks.

4 FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

Four-year-olds are bigger and sturdier, and their play is even more energetic, active, and noisy than it was when they were three. They can climb over everything in sight--boxes, barrels, ladders, trees, the living room couch--anything between them and the other side. Playground equipment is an exciting world for experimenting. They'll find every possible way of coming down a slide. They can make themselves go "higher" on swings now, and they can hang by their knees from rings and bars or turn somersaults. Somersaults are practiced everywhere. Both three- and four-year-olds like to compete with one another to see who can climb or jump the highest or ride their tricycles the fastest. Four-year-olds can dress and undress themselves, brush their teeth, and eat most food without help. Their small muscle coordination still is not well developed, so tying their shoes isn't as easy as lacing them, but they can do more things than they could a year ago. They can cut with a blunt pair of scissors and color or paint pictures that begin to look like real things. Doing all these things helps children develop the physical skills that they need.

5

FIVE-YEAR-OLDS

Five-year-olds are still on the go, but they are not as restless as four-year-olds. They play just as hard, but their play seems to be more organized. They can stand and balance on one foot, and they can jump and skip. They like to run, skip, dance, and climb, and they can ride their tricycles with no problems. They like to pull and push wagons and experiment with the different ways they can do things such as pulling them with a tricycle. They build special climbing things out of boxes and boards to show how brave and skillful they are. Five-year-olds learn to throw and catch large balls. At this age, some children can do these things sooner and better than others because some just develop more quickly than others. At five, their large muscles are still better coordinated than their small muscles, and their hand/eye coordination is not yet completely developed. Girls and boys are about the same size, but girls are better developed and sometimes do things better. Five-year-olds usually use either their right or their left hand most of the time for eating or coloring. Five-year-olds are very independent. They want to wash themselves, feed themselves (with a spoon and fork and maybe even using a knife), and they insist on dressing themselves, except for tying shoes and doing the small buttons and snaps. They need help there.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Three- to five-year-olds like to talk, and as they grow they have longer and more complicated conversations each year. They learn from 500 to 600 words every year and can understand more words than they actually use.

Three-year-olds can talk in short sentences, understand simple directions, and can tell people what they want or how they feel. Some three-year-olds are difficult to understand, but by the time they are four they usually can speak clearly. Certain sounds may be hard to make, saying "mudder" for "mother" or "vewy" for "very." This usually clears up without special help by the time children start repeating words, or stuttering. Again, they usually outgrow this in a short time.

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4

Four-year-olds use words to express ideas and feelings. Sometimes they use words to settle arguments with their playmates instead of hitting or grabbing. People outside the family generally can understand what four-year-olds say. They can say the first sound of most words right except for a few letters that are bad for them. The most common problems are with s, r, v, l, sh, ch, and th. Four-year-olds also like to listen to and repeat stories, especially about themselves and their families. They like nonsense rhymes and jingles, simple poems and songs. They also like to play with words just to see how they sound--silly words, and nonsense words that rhyme. They can make up simple stories and tell about objects in pictures, and they love to ask questions that never seem to stop.

5

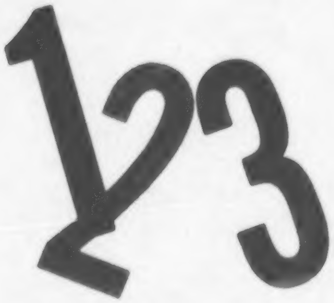
Five-year-olds can be chatterboxes. They talk about everything they see, asking questions and wanting answers. They can speak clearly and use longer sentences. They can answer questions and delight in telling favorite stories over and over again. Be patient and listen to them. Remember to enjoy talking with five-year-olds, not always at them. Young imaginations are creative and exciting and need to be encouraged.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

During these years, children learn to understand their world, and they grow in their ability to think. An example of differences between three and five is in their use of numbers.

- Three-year-olds can say numbers but usually can't actually count objects.
- Four-year-olds can count three objects, pointing at them as they count out loud.
- Five-year-olds can count up to 10 objects. They can also name colors, and they can start and finish things such as cutting out pictures and pasting them on a large piece of paper.

Three-year-olds learn a great deal from seeing and imitating others, through play, and through their natural curiosity. They are curious about everything. An important part of their learning is in exploring and finding out for themselves. They want to find out about things for themselves, not to have grown-ups tell them everything. Children don't learn by just looking. They also learn by touching, hearing and trying, and they ask questions. They begin learning about some things that they can't see, such as trust, and about things that take place in their world, such as birth and death.



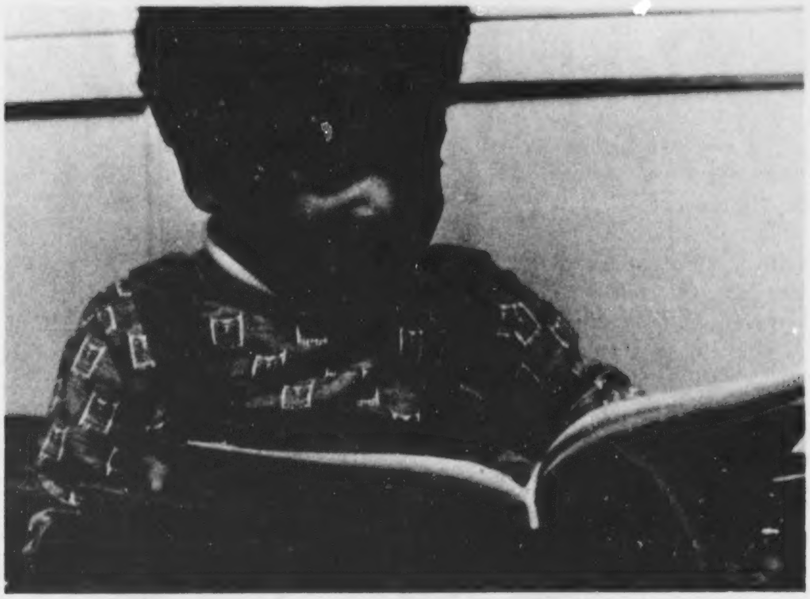
FOUR-YEAR-OLDS

Four-year-olds can be quite inventive. They are able to remember and think about things in their mind. This ability can be seen in the way they make up games about cowboys or nurses or doctors or pilots. They like play-acting, imitating the world around them; they like to build things, to experiment.

Sometimes children in this age group confuse what is real and what isn't. This is especially true about television. So many T.V. programs seem real that it is difficult for children to understand that some of what they see is make believe.

5

Five-year-olds are almost school children. They are much more grown up than three-year-olds. Now they're ready for kindergarten, a little scared, but nonetheless, eager to go. They can spend more time on one activity. Their attention span is longer. They still like most of the things that younger children like--blocks, paint, clay, tools, puzzles, and they can use them better. In painting, for example, they put in more details, such as a door and windows in a house, or eyes and nose and mouth on a person. They like to take their paintings home and show them off. They like stories even better than they used to. Favorites are about things (trucks, planes, rockets); families (their own and others, nontraditional as well as the traditional two-parent family); children from other places; and situations in which children have problems to work out. They also like imaginative stories and funny ones. In addition to looking at the pictures, five-year-olds may begin to look at the letters and try to figure out the words.



SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Through these years, children gradually learn to get along with more people. Before age three, children are usually with adults and just a few other children. Many three-year-olds go to day care centers or play in the neighborhood with other children. In this way they learn to interact with more people.

Three-year-olds are easier to get along with than two's, who may say no to everything. They understand words well enough to follow simple directions, and they are more interested in new activities. They still get upset when things don't go their way, but they don't usually have temper tantrums. Instead of hitting their sisters or brothers or playmates when they are angry, they are more likely to use words to show their anger. "I don't like you" or "go away" may take care of it.

People are important to three-year-olds. They like to play with other children, but they still like to have a parent or adult around to help them feel safe and secure. The adult is there for another purpose--to help children learn how to play, how to share, and how to settle arguments. Three-year-olds do not yet understand playing with other children. Children may wander off from their playmates, not because they are angry or upset but because they've lost interest in what is going on.

Three-year-olds are learning to take turns and will wait in line to go down the slide or get a drink at the fountain. They're also learning to ask for something they want instead of just taking it. By three-and-a-half, children sometimes get whiney and are not as pleasant as they were. Many like to tease their older brothers and sisters, but they get along well with younger ones. Children this age may have an imaginary playmate, and their sense of self continues to increase.

4

Four-year-olds become more adventurous and more independent. They like to play in their yards, but they may wander down the block to see what's going on, or want to go to a friend's house to play. They boast and brag and make a lot of noise and like to play with other children in small groups. They play well with boys and girls, but often have a best friend of the same sex, possibly because they like to play the same things.

Four-year-olds are name callers, and when they get angry they are likely to tell a friend, "I don't want to play with you anymore." They need less supervision than they did at three, and they don't run to mother nearly as often as they used to.

They like to play with other children, but they still turn to adults for comfort and are very attached to them. At times, though, they argue with adults and resist their suggestions. They want to be more independent, but when they're sick or tired, they want to be babied and helped.

5

Five-year-olds are better able to play with other children. They play best together in groups of two to five, taking turns and understanding that certain toys belong to certain children. They usually play with both older and younger brothers and sisters or other children. They generally get along well with adults.

Five-year-olds are even more independent that four-year-olds. They like to do things for themselves, such as washing and dressing and especially being trusted to go on errands like going to a grocery store for something. Five-year-olds will follow directions faithfully and be very proud when they come home from the store. This new independence means the children are taking some responsibility for their own actions, such as setting the table and learning the difference between right and wrong. Five-year-olds like to do what is expected of them, and they want to fit into their home and social environment.

Things come into balance for five-year-olds. It is a good age for children to attend kindergarten, because they are ready to go to kindergarten. They dawdle less than four-year-olds and they like to finish what they start. They ask fewer questions, but the ones they ask are more specific. Five-year-olds are growing up as healthy and responsible human beings.

II WHAT CHILDREN NEED FROM ADULTS

Three- to five-year-olds are in perpetual motion. Just keeping up with them seems to take all the energy the adult caregiver is able to find. It is a very creative and exciting period of growth, and there are a number of things an adult caregiver can do to stimulate health growth--physically, mentally, and socially/emotionally.

Children catch more communicable diseases at these ages than they do at any other time in their lives. All children should get immunizations (shots) to keep them from getting the traditional childhood diseases such as mumps, measles, rubella (German measles), whooping cough, and polio. Cuts and bruises and scraped knees and noses happen to all three- to five-year-olds. Fire and drowning are causes of serious injury and death.

Regular physical checkups at least once a year are important. The social worker or the county medical association can provide the names of a medical clinic or doctor if necessary. Both parents and caregivers should keep a record of the immunization children have had to know which ones are still needed. Youngsters will need this information when they start first grade.

PHYSICAL DEVELOPMENT

Children need good, nourishing meals three times a day, as well as midmorning and midafternoon snacks. Growing children need a well-balanced diet that includes proteins, vitamins, minerals, and carbohydrates. Meals do not have to include expensive food, but they should have plenty of milk and other dairy products: meat, fish, chicken, eggs; green and yellow vegetables; fruit; and cereals. Three- to five-year-olds may not eat a lot at any one time, but they should be offered a balanced meal at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. At snack time try to get them in the habit of eating healthy snack foods such as milk, fresh fruit, and raw vegetables. They have no real need for junk food and sweets, such as sodas, chips, candy, or cookies.

Children need plenty of rest during these years. It helps to have a planned bedtime so that children get used to going to bed around the same time each night. They need rest or quiet play during the day too. Children (especially those in day care) must have a quiet, comfortable place where they can lie down. Children in this age group often need reassurance that they will be awakened at the end of their rest if they go to sleep. Note: Some children cannot discriminate between sleep and death or do not realize that sleep has a predictable end--this leads to many fears and resistance of sleep. Three-year-olds will probably fall asleep, but four- and five-year-olds may like to look at books or play with a puzzle or quiet toy. When children go to afternoon kindergarten, plan a time for quiet play before lunch so they will be rested when they leave school.

PLAY

Children must be taught important habits of cleanliness during these years. Help them learn to wash their hands and face and to give themselves a bath and brush their teeth. By five, children should be able to do these things, although they probably will need an occasional reminder to make sure they do.

Encourage children to play outside, to run, jump, climb and do all the things that three- to five-year-olds love to do. This play is really an important part of learning, for it helps build large motor skills. Without these skills, children lag behind their age-mates in social development and in how they feel about themselves. Physical play is a big part of the normal play and social activities in this age group. Sometimes children don't learn how to do certain skills because adults are overprotective or find it quicker and easier to do things themselves. Encourage children to put on their own clothes or get ready for bed by themselves instead of always doing these things for them. At first children often put clothes on backwards or button them wrong, but with practice and help and patience, they will become more skillful and feel very "grown-up."

Prevent accidents by keeping cleaning materials and other poisons locked up or out of reach. Teach children basic safety rules, such as not running into the street, not playing with matches, and putting wheel toys away so people won't trip over them. Let your children take swimming lessons as soon as the public swimming program for their age group begins. Knowing how to swim could prevent many of the drownings that occur every summer.

LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT

Encourage language development by letting children talk about what they have been doing or what they have seen. Listen to what they say. Let children hear talking among others in the family and with friends. Children from homes where adults don't talk to one another or to their children have trouble expressing themselves. It's easy to think of things to say to children. Talk about everything. "See the ball bounce," "What a pretty red flower," "Let's have carrots for lunch today." Such simple sentences help the child learn, and they help adults learn to have warm communication with their children.

Meals are a good conversation time. Meals should be pleasant for the entire family or group. Everyone can learn by exchanging ideas through conversation--through communication.

Children can learn different sounds from nature--a running stream, rain hitting the roof, wind blowing through the trees. Children can also learn sounds from common materials: a tambourine made from two paper plates stapled together and filled with beans or gravel; or glasses filled to different levels with water to make different bell sounds when lightly tapped. Singing is a happy thing for children and they can learn from it. In addition to developing language and tone, it brings people together.

REACTION

Encourage children to talk about what they want, how they feel, what they have done, seen, or hear, and what they want to do. Communication means both giving and receiving information. It involves at least two people, one to talk and one to understand and respond. Children need listeners, and adults must show they are interested in listening.

Youngsters like to hear stories, and reacting to them provides language and intellectual stimulation as well as pleasure. There are many good books at the public library for young children. The librarian can help choose books children will like. Let children choose books for themselves. Try not to get books that have stories about witches or monsters that might scare three- or four-year-olds. Five-year-olds may find them exciting as long as they know they are make-believe. When reading a story, encourage children to turn the pages and to look at the pictures. Learning to like books is one of the first steps in learning to read.

Tell stories. Children like to hear stories about themselves, their families, and their playmates. Sometimes adults can talk about interesting or funny things they did when they were little or that someone else in the family did. Both adults and children should enjoy these story-telling sessions.

MENTAL DEVELOPMENT

Adults can help children by providing many opportunities for them to learn. Children learn in many different ways:

. Playing with many things and people

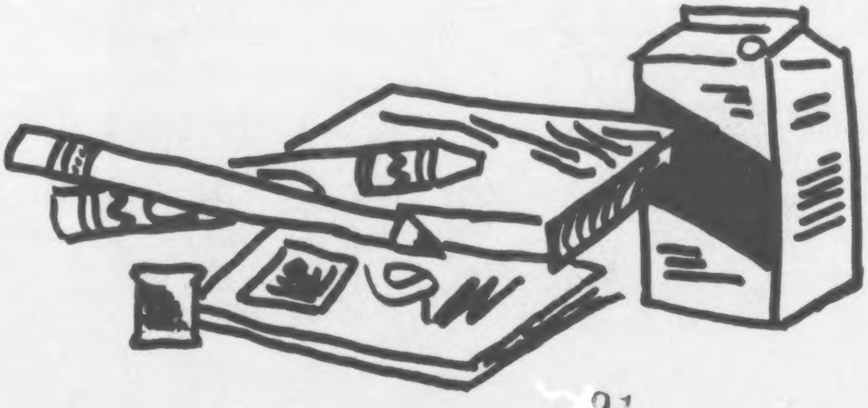
. Exploring and using their senses of smell, taste, and touch as well as seeing and hearing

. Watching and imitating others

. Being guided by an adult

Play is an important way of learning. Using common sense, try to let children play what they want to, so long as the play is safe and doesn't interfere with others. Encourage their ideas. Criticism will only limit their initiative and imagination and take away their desire to learn.

Give children stimulating things to play with. These do not have to be expensive toys. Use things around the house to make all kinds of toys. Let the children help make them. Empty milk cartons and egg cartons, scraps of material, pieces of wood, old tires, magazines, all can be turned into new exciting play things. There are books at the library that tell about making inexpensive toys. Parents and day caregivers can share ideas and the collection of materials. Let them have fun with crayons and paints, clay, safe tools, and scraps of wood. Don't get upset if they don't finish what they start or if the don't do a very good job. The important thing is the satisfaction children get from the act of creating, not necessarily from the finished product.



EXPLORATION

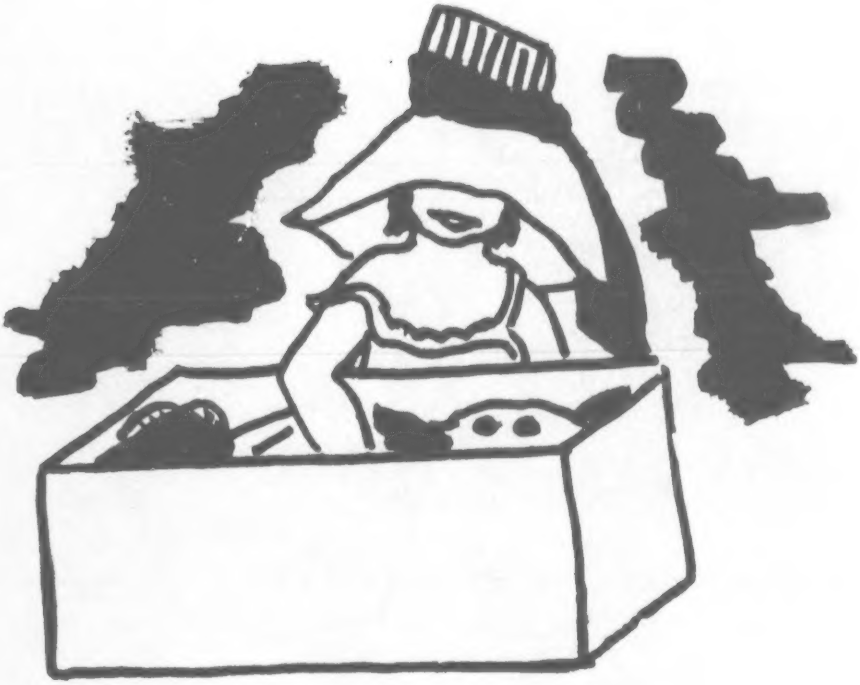
Exploring new experiences is a way for children to find things out for themselves (again within the limits of safety and good sense). Describing how good bread smells while it is baking isn't the same as smelling it first hand. Help children learn by letting them help bake, or letting them make things. Encourage them to try to do something, and if it doesn't work, to try again. This will help them learn that trying again can help them do better next time. They can learn that mistakes are a natural part of learning. Putting a puzzle together, trying first one piece and then another until they find the right one, is a good example of this.

Imitation is another way children learn. Let children help you with chores around the house or in the center. These are other types of learning experience for young children. Three- and four-year-olds can help set the table, make the bed, and empty wastebaskets. They can also be responsible for picking up toys at the end of the day. They may not do things as well as adults, but remember not to judge them by adult standards. Instead, tell them what a good job they have done and thank them for helping. They will learn from the experience and, with encouragement, they will be eager to try again.

PRETENDING

Direct guidance or instruction is another way to help. There are a number of things that children like to do that will help them learn:

- Singing, playing singing games, rhymes, and dancing
- Dramatic play, including acting out stories, imitating members of the family or friends or television characters, playing pretend visits to the store or the doctor
- Collecting things from nature, such as different kinds of leaves or rocks or other things that do not cost anything and that can be found in the yard or on walks to the park or playground.



SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Children learn social behavior from what they see adults and others do and from the way they are treated rather than from being told what to do. Telling a child "You must not hit" is not very effective if the child sees an adult hit others or if the child has been hit by adults.

Children in foster homes sometimes come from families where there was no adult to trust and where curiosity was a "no-no." These children need extra love and repeated reassurance that they are free to explore, to ask questions, to learn. They need encouragement so that they will not be afraid to try.

Attitudes are more difficult to explain than how something works. Young children, particularly those who have lost a parent, are concerned about death. Others want to know about religion, or why they keep living with different families. It is best to answer only their specific questions. When a child is ready to know more, he or she will ask about more. Try to be truthful and at the same time warm and affectionate. Children should feel free to talk about these complicated things.

TV

Children learn many things through television. When children watch TV, adults should watch with them. Help them understand what they see on television so they can know the difference between what is real and what is make-believe. Answer their questions, and talk together about the programs. Help them develop the values that are important, not just those that appear in a cops and robbers show.

Bedtime can be an important time for adults and children. Adults can help by spending some quiet time with the child each evening. Three-year-olds like a bedtime routine. They may take the same toy or blanket to bed and want a story and a goodnight kiss every night, in the same order. By four, though, they like a parent to put them to bed. The routine usually doesn't have to be the same every evening. Three-year-olds are sometimes restless during the night. They may get up to wander around or crawl into bed with a parent. For the next two years, they generally sleep through the night, and if they need to go to the bathroom, they can get up and go by themselves.

AWAY FROM HOME

Parents can help the child who is leaving home to attend a day care center, kindergarten, or first grade for the first time. Some children accept change very easily while others do not.

Some of the important things to do are:

. Take children for a physical checkup to be sure they are in good health. Get the immunizations, or shots, that the doctor recommends to prevent many of the contagious diseases of childhood.

. Teach children some of the basic skills such as dressing and taking care of their own belongings.

. Teach children their address and phone number. Youngsters usually are proud to learn this information. It gives them a sense of identity and belonging. It is important for them to know these things in case they get lost or in trouble.

. Take children to visit the center or school and meet the teacher.

. If children cry on the first day or hold back, reassure them you'll come back at a specific time. Don't sneak away. If possible, parents should stay awhile, then say goodbye gently yet firmly and then leave. Chances are they'll be fine as soon as they realize that there are all kinds of new and exciting things to do and see.

III IDENTIFYING AND HANDLING PROBLEMS

Being alert to possible signs of trouble in growing children is very important. Even more important is getting the proper care for children who have problems. Adult caregivers usually are able to help the children, but if the problem calls for professional help, the adult should act quickly to find the best source. Immediate treatment is vital in all areas of development.

This section provides some specific things to look for that might indicate problems, along with some suggestions on what to do if there seems to be a problem. It is divided into three areas of development: physical problems, language/mental problems, and social-emotional problems.

In general, there are some steps which should always be taken. If you are a day home mother or work in a child care center, you should first of all check with the mother or legal guardian, describe your observations, and suggest that the child be seen by a nurse or a physician.

If you are a foster parent or legal guardian, you should contact the physician. If you do not have a family physician or if this would present a financial burden, ask the licensing worker, case worker, or local health department for help.

Keep in mind that a physician sees a child for only a brief time and may not be aware of symptoms which indicate a problem. Therefore, it is very important to write down any problems you may observe, noting when they occur and under what conditions. The sooner many problems are found, the sooner the caregiver can start doing the right kinds of things to resolve them, or to help the child accept and learn to live with the special problem.

Just because a child once or twice shows one of the symptoms described in the following pages does not mean that anything is wrong. When the symptoms occur several times or are long lasting, however, the child should be seen by a physician.

PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

There are a number of signs that indicate a child between the ages of three and five may not be developing as well as he or she should. These have to do with:

How a child looks

- poor or strange posture, such as never standing up straight or always leaning to one side.
- standing with legs or hips obviously uneven
- unusual awkwardness or clumsiness in getting around
- standing very pigeon-toed (feet facing toward each other) or slew-footed (feet facing away from each other)
- cross-eyed or wandering eye

How a child moves

- stumbling or falling a lot
- walking stiff-legged
- walking on tiptoe most of the time
- twitching or jerking movements
- trembling or shaking frequently
- unable to pick up small objects

How a child listens

- no reaction to loud street or house noises
- not answering questions
- always turning the volume on the TV or radio to a very loud level.
- watching your mouth when you speak

How a child sees

- tripping over things which most children usually either pick up or walk around.
- sitting very close to the television set, or to books read or pictures shown
- squinting when trying to see things or work with small pictures or materials

How a child acts

- always seems tired
- never wants to run and jump around
- often whiny and irritable
- unable to do many of the things which most children of the same age can do, such as riding a tricycle, feeding and dressing themselves, going down a slide, running easily around corners, jumping.

Often lack of energy and/or irritability may be signs that a child is not getting enough sleep or enough of the right kinds of foods. If either of these is the problem, proper rest and diet may be all that is needed. Some children need time to adjust to a new situation. Perhaps they have never had wheel toys or freedom to run around and play. Reassurance and encouragement may be all that is needed.

Once you have checked with the physician, he or she may be able to correct the problem or to direct you to the best place to go for help. You will then be able to help by following instructions given by the physician or appropriate person, by not calling attention to the problem, and by helping the child learn in spite of the problem. For example, if children have poor vision, it is helpful for them to sit close to you when you are reading books or telling stories so they can see the pictures and your facial expressions.

Always encourage children in their efforts to learn, and help them choose activities and toys that will not be too frustrating for them.

LANGUAGE/MENTAL PROBLEMS

Children from three through five are into everything. Physically, they run and jump and climb, and always want to try new and exciting things. Intellectually they are also into everything. They are curious about what they see, wanting to know what things are, how they work, who made them, how to use them, why they look like they do, where they came from, and on and on. It is normal for children to be curious and to want to learn. During this time children advance very rapidly in their ability to talk and express ideas. Many children continue to mispronounce words; however, this is not unusual, unless the child is not understandable to others. Also, repeating words or saying "uh" is typical for young children and generally will be outgrown.

In order to identify children who may have mental or language problems, adults should watch for:

- children who aren't curious, who don't ask questions but are quiet about whatever is going on around them
- children who don't learn many new words, who speak in short and incomplete sentences, who have trouble communicating with others, or who barely speak at all
- children who won't explore and try new things, who seem afraid to show any curiosity or interest
- children who seem unable to remember anything

Adults can help by remembering that children develop at different speeds and by not expecting all children to perform at the same level. For example, if a child is difficult to understand, help by listening calmly without rushing the child.

To help children who have difficulty listening to or understanding what is said, speak clearly and distinctly, perhaps using shorter sentences. Give these children a lot to talk about by taking them places, reading them stories, and playing with them. If, however, problems continue or seem to get worse, a child may need special help from a speech therapist. In larger cities there is usually a public or private speech clinic. Many universities have speech clinics which provide services at a small charge. Nearly all public schools have a speech therapist. Remember that children from the age of three upward are eligible for public school special services, including speech therapy. Of course, the extent of the problem and the therapist's schedule affect the services provided for young children. The social worker or care worker can be of help in identifying local services.

SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL PROBLEMS

Children often have temporary periods of unhappiness or unpleasant behavior. Usually this can be handled by consistence and patience. Young children usually are unable to tell adults how they feel or what is wrong. Therefore, the adult must try to see and feel things from the child's view.

When children are sick or tired, they often act babyish and want more help and attention than usual. Everyone needs a little extra attention once in a while. Give them help when they want it, but continue to encourage them and praise them for doing things for themselves, and they will soon go back to their more independent selves.

TROUBLE SIGNS

In some instances, when the trouble signs occur frequently or for several months (more than three), children may need special help. Be alert for:

. Children who don't get along with other children

These children may pick on others and don't learn to share or cooperate. Often they are unhappy. They may be in need of guidance and of clear, well-defined limits to make them feel loved and cared for.

. Children who seem unhappy

Some unhappy children dislike adults and are suspicious of friendly actions toward them. They often avoid talking with them or move away when an adult approaches.

. Children who do not like themselves

Children with a poor self-concept think they are not as good as other children. They may not want to try new things. They often say, "I can't do that," and rarely want to show you their work.

. Children who are unusually tense or anxious

Tugging at clothing, chewing or biting fingernails, and twisting or wringing hands, are some of the symptoms of anxiety in youngsters.

. Children who are unusually withdrawn

These children usually play alone. They may not want to work or play with other children and some try to avoid getting involved in any activity or task.

CARE AND LOVE

Children who have been brought up in institutions often show many of these signs. There they may have been thought of as just one more child and might not have received the attention of a caring adult. These signs also appear in children from families that have had many problems--illness, extreme poverty, cruelty, or a combination of these things. Children in foster homes often come from unhappy backgrounds. Many of them have special problems because they have never learned to trust. They haven't had a chance to acquire a positive self-image that is so important in growing up. These children need special attention, understanding, and love to help them learn to accept themselves. Once they can do that, they can learn to like other children and adults so they can grow into healthy human beings.

Unusually rebellious or withdrawn children need quick attention. Such signs should be taken seriously and should not be pushed aside in the hope that the child will outgrow the problem.

HAPPY GROWTH

To help young children grow into happy and competent youths and adults, the most important things you can do are:

. Be consistent.

When adults are strict one day, permissive the next, children don't know what to do or what to expect. They will start testing the limits, seeing how much they can get away with. This is frustrating for young children. They like to know what they are supposed to do and how they should act.

. Expect children to do as well as they are able, yet don't be too demanding. If too much is expected from young children, they may become overly concerned about how they act. They may become afraid to explore, to try things out, to learn. It is best to be kind and affectionate and to give consistent guidance. This helps children become self-confident and independent, and to trust those who are guiding them.

. Offer affection and love, showing children they are wanted and valued.

. Be patient, understanding, and interested.

. Present children with an opportunity to be active and to learn to do things for themselves by developing their minds and their muscles.

. Create an opportunity to learn to share, to cooperate, to get along with others.

. Set a positive example to follow.

. Help children feel secure enough to begin to trust others and to have a good self-concept.

It is not the size of a house or center or the amount of fancy furniture and materials in it that makes the difference. It is the emotional atmosphere that is important--the love and acceptance, the fairness and positive outlook, that let a child reach and grow freely in these important early years. When the above techniques do not change the problem behavior, they are signals that show special attention is needed, maybe even outside professional help. Talk to your social worker, case worker or physician, or get in touch with the local Mental Health/Mental Retardation Center for special help and advice.

SUMMARY

During the "runabout years" the children have been busy exploring and trying everything in sight. The things they have experienced at home or in a center will affect the way they will respond to other children, adults and the world around them. As stated earlier, there are many changes taking place between the ages of three and five. In many respects, the three-year-old's needs are very different from the five-year-old's. But one basic need exists regardless of the age, and that is the need for love, acceptance and guidance from the caregiver.

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Take this test both before and after studying this module to see what you have learned. An answer key is on the next page.

Read each question and circle all the correct answers. THERE IS MORE THAN ONE CORRECT ANSWER FOR SEVERAL OF THE MULTIPLE CHOICE ITEMS.

1. True False By the age of three, most children have sufficient muscle development and hand/eye coordination to be able to draw pictures and do other "small" things.

2. True False Three-year-olds may be able to say numbers but they usually can't actually count objects.

3. Most 4-year-olds can:

   A. Hang by their knees from bars
   B. Turn somersaults
   C. Brush their teeth
   D. Cut with scissors

4. Most 5-year-olds can:

   A. Stand/balance on one foot
   B. Skip
   C. Feed themselves
   D. Tie their shoes

5. True False Three- to five-year-olds catch more communicable diseases than at any other time during their lives, including when they first begin school.

6. Children should have a physical check up:

   A. Every six months
   B. once a year
   C. Once before entering school
   D. Whenever they are ill

7. True False By this age, most children's language stimulation will come from other children.

8. True False One of the nice things about three-year-olds is that at last they consistently sleep through the night.

9. True False By the age of 4, children no longer confuse what is real and what is not real, such as events on TV programs.

10. True False Three-year-olds do not yet understand playing cooperatively with other children.

11. True False By the age of five, a child is old enough to go on an errand to a nearby grocery store.

12. True False Unfortunately, few public schools have a speech therapist.

13. Public school special services are available to children beginning at:

A. Birth
B. 3 years of age
C. 6 years of age

14. Which of the following are the most characteristic signs of anxiety in youngsters.

A. Disliking adults
B. Tugging at clothing
C. Biting Fingernails
D. Playing alone

15. True False Rebellious or withdrawn children usually outgrow the problem, sometimes almost overnight.

ANSWER KEY

1. False
2. True
3. All
4. A,B,C
5. True
6. B
7. False
8. False
9. False
10. True
11. True
12. False
13. B
14. B,C
15. False

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